

YORKSHIRE COUNTY ELEVEN.

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HALL.	J. B. WOSTENHOLME (secretary).	WARDALL.	TUNNICLIFFE.	ULYETT.	PEEL.	HUNTER.	TURNER (scorer).
		F. S. JACKSON. MOORHOUSE.	E. SMITH (captain).			G. THORNTON. WAINWRIGHT.	

CRICKET AND CRICKETERS



YORKSHIRE CRICKET AND CRICKETERS.

BY THE REV. R. S. HOLMES.

THE history of Yorkshire cricket has yet to be written. When written, as it deserves to be, by a thoroughly competent pen, it will excite both wonder and pride in all loyal Tykes. For it is not of yesterday, though the present County Club was formed only in 1861; but as far back as 1771, and as recently as 1860, Sheffield and Nottingham, which were to all intents and purposes Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire, met in friendly rivalry, and in the entire history of the game no matches have ever been fought with keener enthusiasm on both sides. From time immemorial this match has been well called "the battle of the bowlers." Again, in 1833, Yorkshire, *i. e.*, Sheffield, tackled Norfolk, then for the first and last time conspicuous in cricket through the superlative skill of the world-famous Fuller Pilch, who is best known to us to-day by reason of his connection with the county of Kent to which he afterwards migrated. As early as 1837, Sussex was encountered; in 1844, Lancashire, or rather Manchester, as it was then called; in 1849, Kent; whilst in 1848, the old All England Eleven, William Clarke's glorious brotherhood, began its long series of engagements with sundry eighteens and twenty-twos in various districts in the county of broad acres.

But our present business is more with Yorkshire cricket and cricketers of recent date. Yet a hurried retrospect may not be without interest to modern Young England.

I have spoken of some of the earlier matches in which Yorkshire figured;

amongst their first opponents, Leicester bulks big, though this town (or rather county) is often to be found helping Sheffield in its contests with Nottingham and other counties, and more than once with the North of England. Darnall used to be the capital town of Yorkshire cricket, though as early as 1813 Ripon was a formidable rival. It was not until 1829 that Sheffield became the county home for cricket, which honourable position it has ever since retained. Even at that date several Yorkshiremen had made for themselves a reputation which spread far beyond the county confines. Two of them certainly deserve honourable mention here.

JAMES DEARMAN, a fast round-arm bowler, capital bat, and a respectable stumper. Great at single-wicket matches, as the custom of those times was. Issued a challenge to any man in England. Alfred Mynn, the Kentish giant, stepped into the breach. Result—Dearman was twice defeated in 1838, at Town Mallings, in Kent, by 112 runs, and at Sheffield by no less than an innings and 36 runs.

TOM MARSDEN, the hero of the longest innings ever scored by a Yorkshireman in a front-rank match. Left-handed, and, like all left-handers, a tremendous hitter. Born in Sheffield, 1805. In 1826, for Sheffield and Leicester *v.* Nottingham, he made 227 runs, and against such bowlers as Tom Barker and old Bill Clarke, the latter probably the greatest lob bowler the world has ever seen. Two years later, and against the same bowling, notched 32 and 125. And that in the days when the lawn-mower and heavy roller were unknown, and when scores generally

reigned low. Marsden and his feats were sung in song :—

"O, Marsden at cricket is nature's perfection,
For hitting the ball in any direction;
He ne'er fears his wicket, so safely he strikes,
And he does with the bat and the ball as he
likes."

Here he is from a South point of view:—

"Next Marsden may come, though it here must
be stated,
That his skill down at Sheffield is oft over-
rated;
But an out-and-out bat when the bowling is
loose,
As a bowler and fielder of very great use."

At this distance
one has no de-
sire to settle this
little difference of
opinion.

Between these two landmarks in Yorkshire cricket—viz., 1829 and 1861—cricket spread rapidly into every corner of the county, though nearly all the prominent cricketers came from Sheffield and its immediate neighbourhood, so much so that the county team was often composed exclusively of Sheffielders. Marsden had formidable rivals in his own town, and worthy successors not a few. HARRY WRIGHT was one; a batsman and fine point, and good enough with the bat to represent his county for eighteen seasons (1843-1860), and to secure a place in the United All England Eleven, a split from Clarke's itinerant combination. But greater far than Wright, or than any Yorkshireman of his day, was HARRY SAMPSON, who played first in 1832, and who in his last match in 1857 was top scorer. Regularly was included in the North of England Elevens. Had the best average in England in 1848, viz., 28, George Parr's being 22.

Essentially a back player (a contrast, therefore, to Pilch), and had a brilliant cut. Was honoured with a place in Anderson's coloured lithos of famous cricketers, and there figures as a short and very thick set man, not at all unlike the build of Andrew Greenwood and Ephraim Lockwood of later time. Was held in high regard by the Dukes of Norfolk and Rutland, who gave him a free hand to fish in the trout streams on their estates. Like many another Yorkshire cricketer, Sampson ran a "public" when his cricketing days were over. He, too, like Dearman and Marsden,

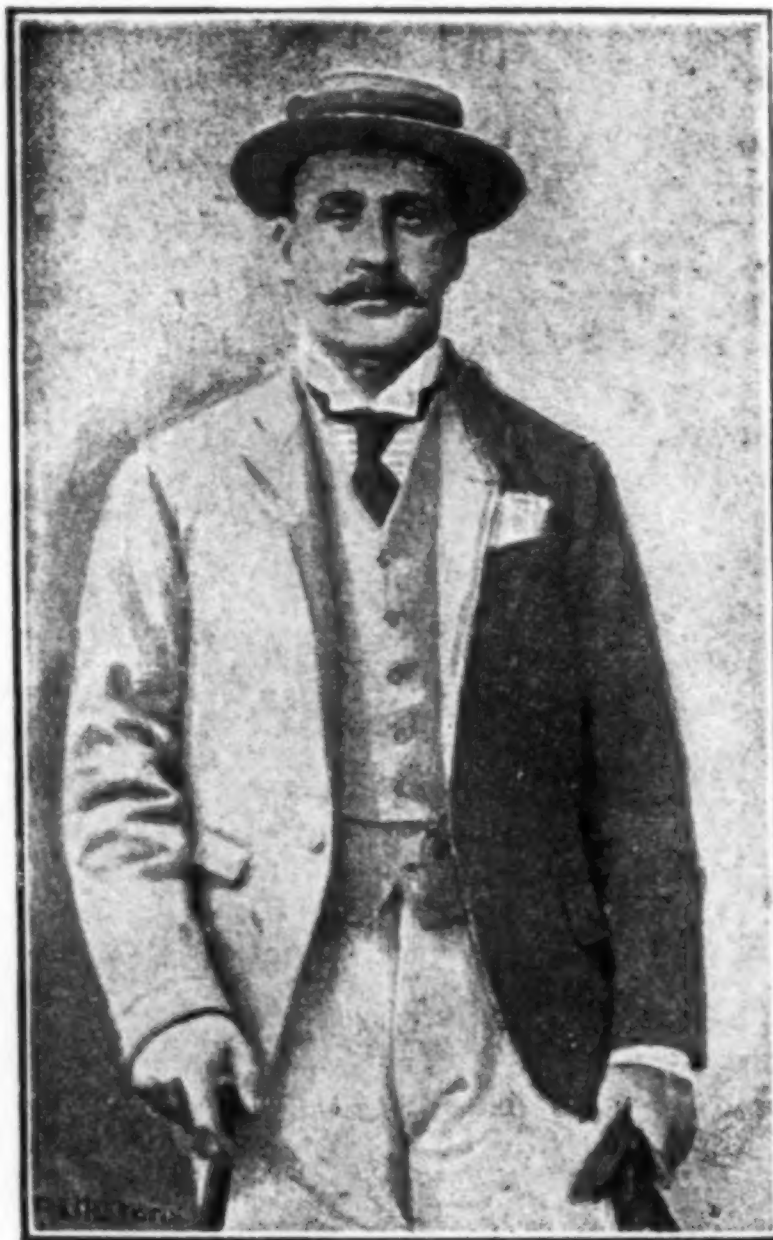
played several single-wicket matches with marked success.

But, with the formation of a regular County Club in 1861, Yorkshire cricket assumed a commanding position it never held before; and from that year forward it has boasted a long line of distinguished cricketers.

Transferred to Sheffield in 1829, Hyde Park was the central cricket ground for many years. But, as it was also used for pedestrianism the cricket portion got sadly neglected, and so in 1855 the historic Bramall Lane Ground was opened, and

still flourishes in all its glory.

A visit to Bramall Lane on the part of a Londoner will verily prove noteworthy. The ground is $11\frac{3}{4}$ acres in extent, larger than the Oval by $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre, though at both grounds the space reserved for matches covers just 8 acres. Unlike the majority of county grounds, the playing enclosure forms a perfect square; this is bounded by a broad path or walk, behind which are tiers of seats without backs, except within the reserved part. A high



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LORD HAWKE.

wall runs round the ground which contains four entrances—what other ground has so many? For many years, even up to the time when the Surrey Club most wisely made the terrace at the Oval, there was no ground in England where so vast a crowd could watch the game without any obstruction whatsoever as at Bramall Lane. And what a crowd gathers there! Monday is the Sheffielders' Saint's day: that is the reason, perhaps, why nearly all the county matches in Yorkshire are fixed for the first three days of the week. The crowd is unique—a genuine sporting crowd, enthusiastic to a degree, and with a knowledge of the various points of the game that makes them discriminate in a moment between good, bad, and indifferent cricket. Mostly rough, honest working men, in their work-a-day clothes. I know of only one regular *habitué* there who sports a top hat; but as he takes his hat with him to Scarborough, we must regard it as a characteristic peculiarity in the wearer, and by no means a mark of gentility. A walk round in the interval would cause the frequenters of Lord's many an uneasy qualm; the language is expressive, if not elegant, and scores of mugs of beer, along with huge sandwiches, are enough to turn a sensitive stomach. To me, the crowd is nearly as interesting as the game there; how partial it is, though every now and again a brilliant stroke, or wonderful catch on the part of a "foreigner," provokes a chorus of applause the like of which cannot be heard out of Yorkshire. But let Peel bowl the champion, or "our Jarge"—Ulyett's favourite name—..... Lohmann on to the pavilion roof, and you then get to know what a genuine Yorkshire shout is like.

The ground is surrounded by factories, whose chimneys belch out clouds of the blackest smoke, and yet the cricket turf is always of the greenest.

Not the least novel feature of a match is to be seen in the houses overlooking the ground, whence window-frames are removed so as to accommodate the full complement of sight-seers. Admission is never raised above the "nimble tanner." The Duke of Norfolk is the landlord, and granted a lease at the nominal rent of £45 per year. Mr. M. J. Ellison—the Duke's steward for many years, and who represented his county between the years 1835 and 1853 as an active cricketer—has been the honoured president of the County Club

almost, if not quite, from the beginning; whilst the interests of cricket have been also well looked after by Mr. J. Wostinholme, the honorary secretary from time immemorial.

In the matter of cricket grounds Sheffield has several powerful rivals to-day. As far back as 1865, both York and Bradford had separate committees, and aspired to be the County Club. But York has long been out of the running, having been contented to be the centre of the Yorkshire Gentlemen's Cricket Club, once a very powerful team indeed; whilst Bradford had to be satisfied with county matches with Notts and Cambridgeshire for several seasons. Nowadays both Leeds and Bradford urge their claims to county favours, and are doing their level best to break up "the Sheffield Ring." They have both of them magnificent grounds, on a scale of comfort and completeness unknown even at Sheffield; grounds large enough to be divided both for cricket and football, their pavilion facing both ways so as to command a view of both the summer and winter games. This year three county matches apiece have been given to these enterprising towns; whilst at Huddersfield, Halifax, Hull, Scarborough and Dewsbury, are grounds in every way adapted for the best matches, and these have in turn received a visit when Yorkshire has met another county eleven; the "Scarborough Festival" being an annual fixture in the official list of Yorkshire matches.

Like its old rival, Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire has always been renowned for its professionals: very few amateurs have been included in the county team. Yet, prior to 1861, we come across such distinguished gentlemen players as T. R. Barker and R. F. Skelton, both good bowlers—the latter representing his county from 1834 to 1857; Bernard Wake, good bowler and bat; M. J. Ellison—mentioned above. Whilst since 1861, the brothers Prest, C. M. Sharpe (of University fame), Brian Waud (who played for Gents v. Players, in 1867), E. Lumb, and last, but not least, the present noble skipper of Yorkshire cricket, Lord Hawke, have all done good yeoman service for their county. But the "pros" have been the backbone of Yorkshire cricket throughout; as, indeed, they have been in every county that has long been to the front in inter-county cricket. Thus, when Surrey

boasted only three or four "pros," say between 1870 and 1882, Surrey was at the bottom of the tree; now, with at least seven, it is right at the top.

And what a succession of great Yorkshire cricketers we have had since 1861 down to the present year of grace: great bowlers, galore; great stumpers, as often as required; and of batsmen, many that are household words everywhere, and without whom England could never have been fully represented.

Of the older hands, many of whom are still living—of the men who fought under the White Rose when the cricket revival began in 1861—a passing mention must suffice.

W. SLINN and "IKEY" HODGSON, perhaps the two worst bats any county ever possessed at one and the same time, neither being worth more than three runs in a match; yet unsurpassed as bowlers for many years. Slinn was right-handed and fast, Hodgson was left and slow—a capital contrast. County matches in the sixties were but few in number; but these bowlers got work enough by helping almost all the clubs in the county when George Parr's All England Eleven threw down the gauntlet to twenty-two local cricketers.

NED STEPHENSON was the man behind the sticks in those years—no relation to his better-known namesake, H. H., of Surrey fame—a reliable bat, generally first man in, and the first of famous stumpers in Yorkshire; his successors with the gloves being George Pinder, poor David Hunter, and his brother, Joseph Hunter, Yorkshire's present "snapper."

JOE ROWBOTHAM—burly and solid—of

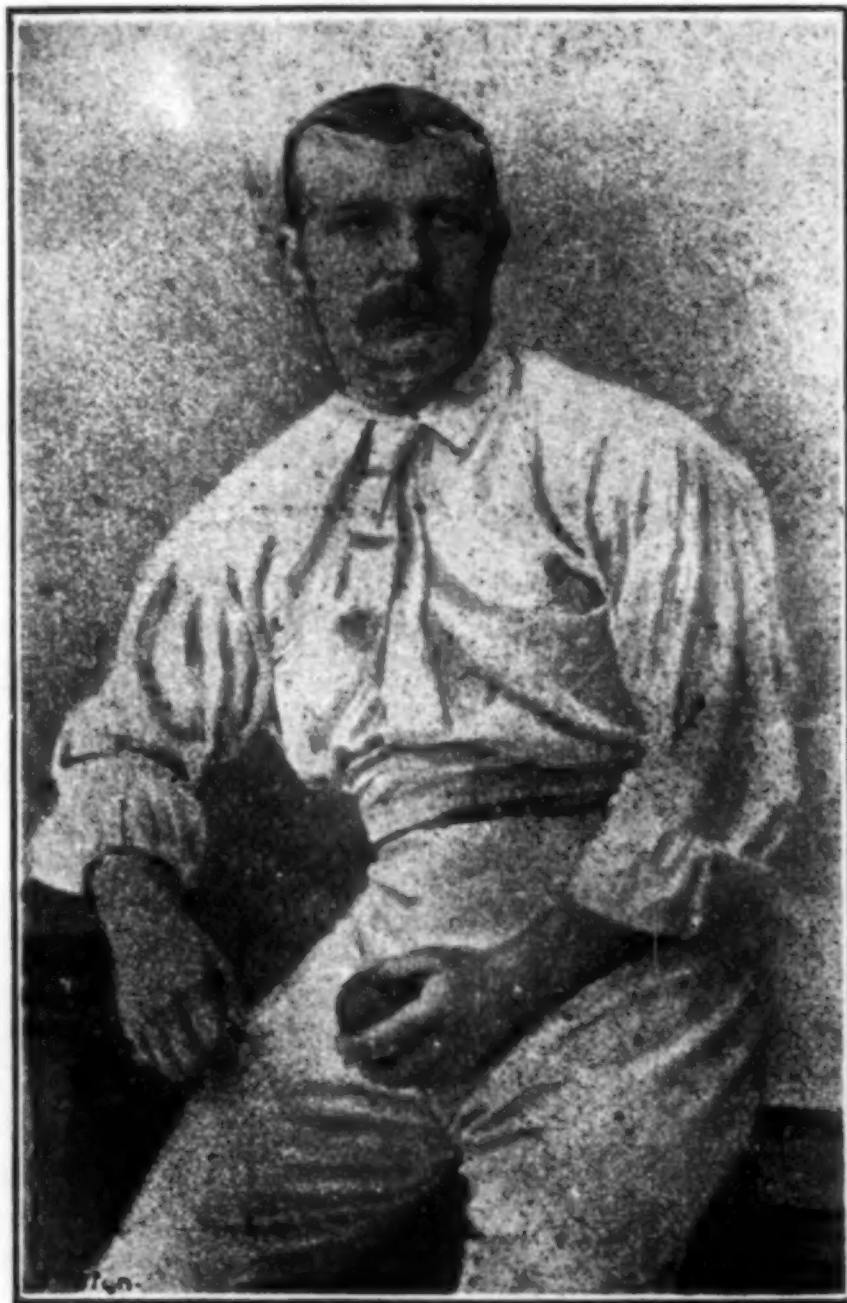
medium height, but a heavy weight, 14½ stones, was thirty years old before he made his mark as a bat, but from 1860 to 1874 was a tower of strength to his county, coming out first in the averages in the year last mentioned, though he was then forty-three years of age. To see him at Lord's, longstopping to such bowlers as Jackson and Tarrant, was a sight never to be forgotten. Only a man of the stoutest heart dare have faced such bowlers on the Lord's of twenty or thirty years back. In this department, "Joe" was *facile princeps*.

GEORGE ANDERSON was another grand cricketer, all but six feet high, of splendid physique, and of most gentlemanly address. An All England man, and perhaps the hardest hitter in England, barring "Ben" Griffith of Surrey; but not a reckless slogger, rather scientific to a degree. An *eight* hit of his at the Oval off Fred Miller's bowling, when the North met Surrey in 1862, has become historic.

GEORGE ATKINSON, now and for many past years "coach" at Ros-sall School, fast-medium round-arm bowler (there was no over-hand

bowling in those days, not until 1864, when the amended law, No. X., allowed the bowler's hand to be raised above the level of his shoulder. Men like Atkinson had bowled too long in the old way to take advantage of this change); had a beautiful delivery; was a fair bat; and, withal, a most worthy man, spite of a little friction between him and the rest of the Yorkshire Eleven through his failure to turn up at Trent Bridge in 1863.

And, last among the past generation, comes IDDISON—Roger, the jovial: played



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ROBERT PEEL.

from 1861 to 1876 for Yorkshire, though between 1864 and 1870 he helped Lancashire, having a cricket depôt in Manchester during those years. Who doesn't recall his jolly, red face, his portly build, and dapper appearance? A splendid bat, with a curious movement of the left leg whilst waiting to take the ball; famous as a point; and, when away with the first English team in Australia in 1861, a terror to Colonial batsmen with his insidious lobs.

Coming nearer home, still, Yorkshire produced a trio of great bowlers in George Freeman, Tom Emmett, and Allen Hill; a wonderful "keeper" in George Pinder; and a couple of first-class batsmen in Andrew Greenwood and Ephraim Lockwood. On each of these "crack" players a chapter might easily be written.

FREEMAN has been described by W. G. Grace as "the finest fast bowler I ever played against." Let that suffice as to his abilities. I saw him often: well-built, on the heavy side, as upright as a dart; took a long run, and in the most stately manner delivered the ball.

In 1868, for Yorkshire, took 50 wickets for 327 runs; altogether, between 1867 and 1871 (inclusive), bowled 246 wickets, in first class matches, at an average of only nine runs a wicket. Too early had to give up cricket for business, in which, as an auctioneer at Thirsk, he has been most prosperous. An infinite pity he had to retire so soon.

ALLEN HILL took his place, and worthily filled it; one of the far-famed Lascelles Hall cricketers, a village some six miles from Huddersfield, and which has been as

prolific in celebrated cricketers as Sutton-in-Ashfield, in Nottinghamshire—the Lockwoods, Bates, Greenwoods, Thewlis, Berrys, Eastwoods, and many others being associated with its club. Hill's career was also short, a series of accidents having befallen him. Right-hand, fast bowler, with about the easiest and prettiest delivery I ever saw; took only a short run. In his first county match, against Surrey in 1871, took twelve wickets—all clean bowled—for 57 runs. Appeared in most of the great matches.

EMMETT—the immortal "Tom," a born wag, the Merry Andrew of modern cricket, was the contemporary of Freeman, Hill, and one or two other generations of Yorkshire cricketers, playing from 1866 to 1888, and with heaps of good cricket left when he was shelved. Bowled left; once, very fast; later, fast medium only. Famous for one or more wides, which were followed by a wicket. The only Yorkshireman that has ever taken nine wickets in one innings, viz., v. Notts in 1868. All through his long career was among the very greatest bowlers. Also a

good bat, playing the game thoroughly, and having a sneaking fondness for W. G.'s bowling. Never was there a more popular cricketer, nor one more enthusiastic on the field; was as lively as a kitten to the last, and the idol of the "ring." One of the best known figures in cricket, and his characteristic walk to the wickets, using the bat as a walking stick, put everybody into a good humour. Too good-natured to make an efficient captain. For some years had a cricketing shop at Keighley, but is now permanent



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TOM EMMETT.

coach at Rugby School. Glorious old Tom!

Lockwood was Yorkshire's crack bat for years. Somewhat clumsily built, and with unusually large feet; but one of the prettiest bats going. Had a lovely late cut—a stroke rarely seen now. One of the Australian cricketers told me that in his judgment Lockwood had more good strokes than any other living batsman. Remarkable as his batting was for Yorkshire, he excelled even more in outside great matches, notably for North *v.* South, and for Players *v.* Gentlemen of England. A fine defensive bat, like Jupp of Surrey, but with plenty of hit. Could bowl, too — medium — and had a safe pair of hands. Is to-day keeping a cricket depôt in Huddersfield, and last year when I called was looking younger than ever, and not so stout.

PEATE and BATES were the next bowling couple; and, like Hodgson and Slinn, Emmett and Freeman, were respectively left-handed and right-handed.

PEATE was little else than a bowler, but for his bowling was worth playing in any match, though he might never score a run. A fine, good-looking fellow, with the easiest delivery, and with a perfect command over the ball. Like all slow bowling, it looked simple enough from the ring or the pavilion. From 1880 to 1886 (inclusive) took more wickets than any bowler in the country, 886 in all, for an average of just thirteen runs a wicket—a wonderful result for a slow bowler, who played in all county and representative matches. I can recall no such achievement as one of Peate's in first class cricket; playing for

Yorkshire *v.* Surrey in 1883, he took eight wickets for five runs. Since his retirement has been engaged, first by the Leeds Club, and now by North Leeds. Has a cricketing depôt in Leeds.

BATES was perhaps inferior to Peate with the ball, though on his day was quite unplayable. If not first, was for years a good second. But was also a fine bat, of the dashing order, not unlike McDonnell, of Australian fame. Just the man when things were looking queer for his side, and the bowlers were having a day out. Had

his fielding been a little more accurate, would have been the best all-round professional in England. As it was, the Players' Team always included his name, and he made several trips to Australia. His cricketing days were suddenly interrupted by a terrible accident whilst practising at the nets in Australia, which resulted in the loss of one eye. Is still playing, though, having been retained by the Leek Club, and from his own accounts can play as well as ever. If that be true, room should at once be made for him in the Yorkshire Eleven,

where his successor has not yet been discovered.

Need I detail the Yorkshire cricketers of to-day? Are not their deeds written bold and clear in the sporting chronicles? Who does not know all about George Ulyett, Louis Hall, and Bobby Peel, who, with Joseph Hunter—"the man behind"—represent nearly all the first class cricket in the county, which, like its old rival, Notts, is certainly under a cloud.

Peel is our only great bowler. As this record shows, this is the first time in the



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GEORGE ULYETT.

last thirty years that Yorkshire has not had at least two big trundlers. And Peel came out in 1882. It's time our luck changed. The committee, as much as the public, realise the present situation, and are trying various experiments to mend matters. Yorkshire still depends chiefly on the men who are certainly past their prime. Thus Ulyett has just begun his twentieth year of county cricket; Hall, his eighteenth; Peel, his eleventh. Not that either of them is anything like done for; there look to be several years of sound cricket in them all. Should there not be, their names will never be mentioned but with thankful pride by all loyal Yorkshiremen.

ULYETT is almost the greatest cricketer Yorkshire has ever had; cricket was born in him. His name will crop up in the summaries with which I shall conclude this chapter. Suffice it here to say, that he has taken the lead in the batting averages in six different years; that in the annual match between Gents and Players, his aggregate is second to W. G.'s, and his average among the best; that in the two matches of 1884, he played three innings—134, 94, 64; that, at times, his very fast bowling has proved unplayable—witness the second Australian innings at Lord's in 1884, when he took seven wickets for thirty-six runs; and that his fielding—right away from the wicket—has always been accurate and reliable, whilst his throw-in has been most helpful in saving runs. Five times has he been to Australia, once each to Africa and America. Only a man of the most splendid physique could possibly have done so much work, both with bat, ball, and in the field.

LOUIS HALL is Ulyett's foil: the Job of Yorkshire cricket; but invaluable. In five different seasons has topped the averages, and on fourteen different occasions has carried his bat right through Yorkshire's innings; has no hitting powers, and cannot bowl: but has set an example in personal habits which many of his *confrères* might with advantage have copied. If they had, Yorkshire cricket would not be so depressed to-day. True, death has been busy in the County's ranks, Preston and Joe Hunter are no more: Bates, too, was placed *hors de combat* through no fault of his. But where are the other men who, within the last six years, gave such abundant promise? It is an infinite

pity that most of them had to be shelved by the County executive. Had they lost their cricket? If so, how? Great cricketers don't grow like mushrooms. It may be years before Yorkshire cricket will recover from the wounds its own players have inflicted on it.

PEEL is our sheet anchor to-day. Long may he flourish. One of England's soundest cricketers; he belongs to the nation equally as to Yorkshire. Once renowned as a bowler, now is quite as reliable as a bat; and throughout, top class in the field. There is not much of him; what there is, is right genuine gold. Is respected by all, because he respects himself. Pluckiest and bravest of cricketers when his side is doing badly. Where would Yorkshire be without him to-day?

The following summaries, culled since 1861, may be of interest to many readers:

Largest innings ever scored by Yorkshire, 559, *v.* Kent, in 1887; largest against Yorkshire, 528 by Gloucestershire, in 1876; and 527 by Middlesex, in 1887.

Smallest innings by Yorkshire, 24, *v.* Kent, in 1865; smallest *v.* Yorkshire 24, by Sussex, in 1878.

Highest individual innings by a Yorkshireman, E. Lockwood, 208, *v.* Kent, in 1883; Ulyett, 199 (not out), *v.* Derbyshire, in 1887.

Highest *v.* Yorkshire, W. G. Grace, 318 (not out), for Gloucestershire, in 1876; A. J. Webbe, 243 (not out), for Middlesex, in 1887.

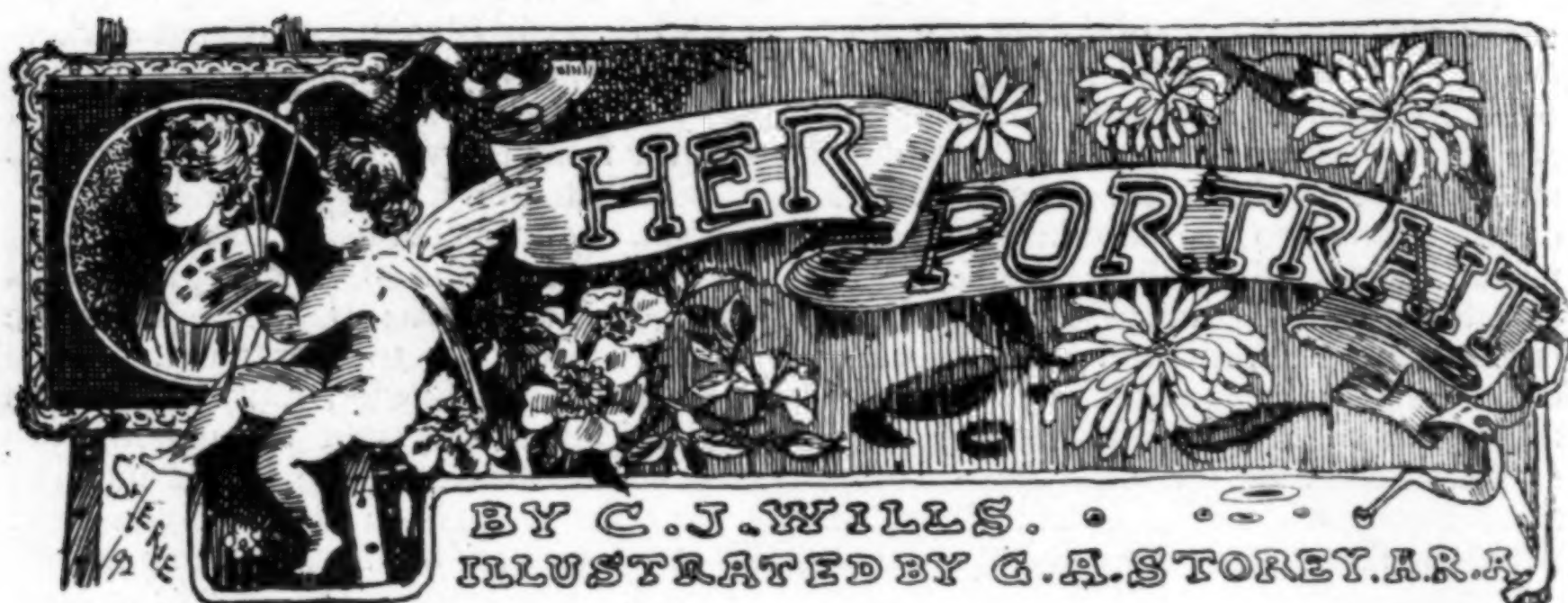
Highest aggregate in one season, Ulyett, 1158 runs in 1882, and 1122 in 1887.

Greatest number of wickets in a season, E. Peate, 116, in 1882.

In 1867, 1870, 1874, 1879, and 1883, Yorkshire was the champion county.

Benefit matches have been played as under: 1870, Edwin Stephenson; 1872, Roger Iddison; 1873, Joe Rowbotham; 1874, Luke Greenwood; 1875, John Thewlis; 1878, Tom Emmett; 1880, George Pinder; 1882, Ephraim Lockwood; 1884, Allen Hill; 1887, George Ulyett; 1891, Louis Hall.

No county has ever been more generous to its professional cricketers. The colts must be found, and when found coached; and when coached, receive a thoroughly good trial in at least three or four successive matches. If the trial prove satisfactory, then let said colts eschew all "elbow-lifting," a habit fatal to sustained excellence in every department of sport.



CHAPTER VI. (Continued).

A LITERARY GIANT.

MR. CHARNELHOUSE suddenly pushed back his chair and glared at Phillida. The girl would have been alarmed if she hadn't caught Mrs. Charnelhouse's eye, in which she saw a twinkle of amusement; and then the lady artist shook her head warningly. I am afraid that it was curiosity that caused Phillida to glance at Mr. Charnelhouse once more. He continued to stare full into her eyes, and then he did a very extraordinary thing; he suddenly extended his closed hands towards her, and then opened them very widely as though he were pelting her with nothing at all. This mysterious proceeding he continued for several minutes; then, addressing her in a very low whisper, he said,—

"Do you feel that you are gradually being overcome with an intense desire to sleep?"

"I can't say I do, Mr. Charnelhouse," replied Phillida briskly.

"Oh," said the novelist, "then I'm deeply disappointed, that's all. I thought you were a subject, Miss Fane. I possess great mesmeric power, and I can send my wife off at a single glance. It's a wonderful thing, the power of the eye. May I ask you, did you resist violently?"

"I don't quite understand," began Phillida.

"Did you, so to say, wrestle with me in the spirit?"

"I can't say that I did," replied Phillida.

"Dear me," cried the little novelist, "that's very extraordinary. Now, would you mind accurately describing to me exactly what was passing through your mind while I was making the passes?"

"Well," said Phillida, "I was astonished, and, and——"

"Awed, I take it, is the word you are seeking," said Mr. Charnelhouse very blandly.

"No, I wasn't awed, I was amused."

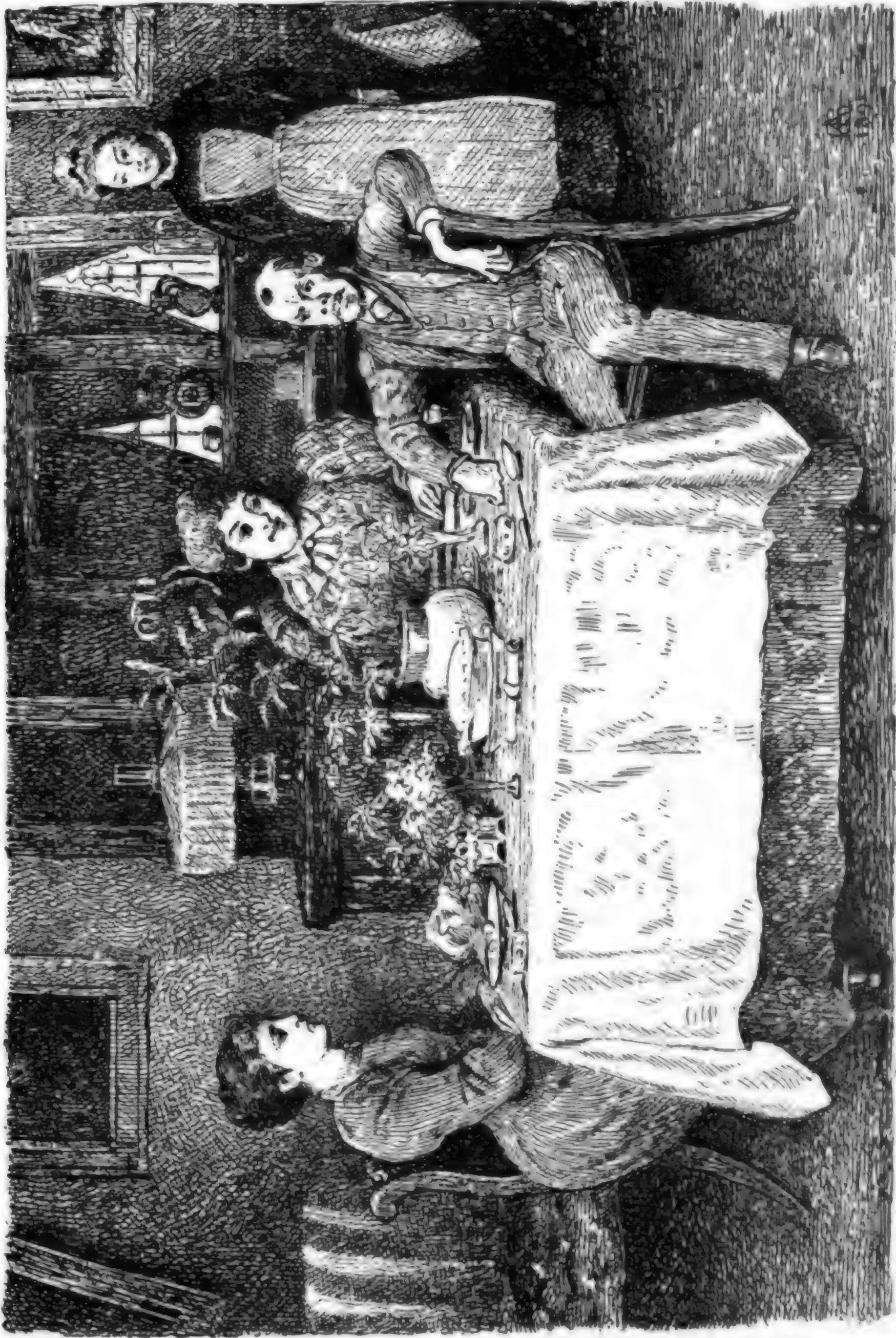
"Then," cried the searcher after hidden things, "you're a scoffer: it's sad to discover a scoffer in one so young," he added with a crushing glance: "you're preparing a dreadful old age for yourself, Miss Fane," the little man went on in a hollow tone; "the time will come, let me tell you, when you will believe in nothing; when the most sacred things will have no interest whatever for you."

"It's no use, Francis," said Mrs. Charnelhouse, "you'll never get Miss Fane to look upon you as a sacred thing. I revere you, of course, because I have to, being your wife."

"I wish you wouldn't chaff a fellow, Glory," said the little man. "It's sad to see such want of reverence in one so young," he said severely.

"Want of reverence and want of appreciation, Francis," said Mrs. Charnelhouse, "are at times closely allied."

"It's the curse of the age," replied her husband: "women now affect to look up to the superior sex; they pose as our mental and physical equals; they forget that,



"NO, I WAN'T AWAY, I WAS AMUSED."

in the hour of danger they have to look to man as their natural protector, women forget that they are mere parasites, the—um—toys with which we beguile our idle hours; they should cry with delight when we give them a smile, and—er—tremble with fear at our frown. Your true woman, your child of nature, always does this;” here the little man rolled his eyes very ferociously, and Phillida began to fear that his very copious lunch had disagreed with him. “Well, good-bye, little woman,” said Mr. Charnelhouse; “good-bye, little woman,” he repeated, and he began to wave his arms about as though he had been a railway semaphore.

Mrs. Charnelhouse rose at once and embraced her tiny tyrant with fervour.

Then the little gentleman gave Phillida a superior smile, and remarked to her as he waved his hand in farewell, “There’s nothing like the married state for bringing women to their senses.”

CHAPTER VII.

CIRCE.

Some of the houses in Lexham Gardens are quite mansions; you always have to pay a heavy premium for your lease to get into this most desirable neighbourhood, and you are generally mulcted in mysterious charges for tenant’s fixtures, and in every case you have to “take to” the blinds and gas-fittings; but you are delighted to do it all the same, because it’s a very great privilege to live in Lexham Gardens at all. No. 23A formed an exception to the rest of the houses in the neighbourhood, as to size; it was a small house, there was no denying the fact. But then a young widow, with no children, who goes into society a good deal, doesn’t want a large house; she requires, what the house-agents call, a bijou residence; and No. 23A was to all intents and purposes a bijou residence, and it exactly suited Mrs. Dacre, who had been now well nigh two years a widow, and who went everywhere, or almost everywhere, and was admired by all men; and, as a consequence, duly hated by all women. Architecturally speaking, and looking at it from the outside, No. 23A struck you at once. It was a red brick house enriched by pale terra-cotta mouldings, which gave one a sort of vague idea that they were of Sierra marble. There was any amount of florid ornamentation in the renaissance

taste about the elaborate porch, and about the windows of the semi-circular projection, imitated from the early Italian, which formed the end of the little drawing-room. There was a huge niche between the porch and the projection, in which, in the most tremendously artistic of art pots, stood a big dwarf palm, that distinctly suggested culture, and, shall we say also, conveyed the idea of wealth.

You never saw Mr. Forcer’s man filling the window-boxes with the choice flowers that agonised in beauty there during the London season, for the best of his clients have their window-boxes attended to the very first thing in the morning. In the porch, on either side, was a row of flowering shrubs. There was the daintiest of little brass knockers on the door, and when you knocked with it, you were astonished that the dainty brass knocker gave forth no sound, but each time that you raised it, you heard a musical note as from the striking of a silver gong; the fact is, that it was a new American “gim,” and of course No. 23A was fitted with every modern improvement, convenience, and luxury—this was one of them. The tiny hall—it is not said disrespectfully, but in bijou houses halls are tiny—was carpeted with a gorgeous Mecca rug; and the red brick wall of No. 24, next door, was artfully concealed by a pretty fernery and coloured glass, which had replaced the common window, which the builder had thought good enough for the place. The steps of the stone staircase were covered by a rich Wilton stair-carpet, which touched the ballusters on one side, and the wall on the other: at the end of the staircase was a heavy *portière* of dark purple velvet, which concealed the door of the drawing-room.

Walter Croft raised the little brass knocker, and then he turned to his cabman—for Walter indulged in a special hansom, which he was in the habit of hiring for two or three hours or more, every day—and dismissed him. The door was instantly opened by a prim young person clad in a decorous black gown, a tremendous apron well tied back, of the snowiest white muslin, and what is technically termed a French cap, with streamers of the same material.

Now the instant that young Mr. Croft’s cab had pulled up at 23A, Mrs. Dacre, who was awaiting him in the drawing-room, had thrust the yellow-covered French

novel she was reading into the music box of the piano stool, had given one final look in the glass, and had favoured her own reflection with a sweet smile of satisfaction, had seated herself at the piano in a gracious pose, and had broken at once into the *second* verse of the song that happened to be just then the fashion—

“If you are the soul of my soul,
If you are the heart of my heart.”

Then, as the door was flung open, the lady turned her smiling face to young Croft, and remarked ingenuously, looking at the moment as much like a frightened fawn as possible, “Oh, Walter, how you startled me.” Then she held out both her hands, which the young fellow took ecstatically, and for a moment he stood gazing at her in mute and honest admiration, while the door was noiselessly closed by the prim and discreet parlour-maid.

“It’s awfully good of you to have me, Cissy,” said the young gentleman who had taken to art as a pastime.

“Now, Walter, you really mustn’t,” said the lady, raising a warning finger, but smiling all the while; “you compromise me dreadfully, you thoughtless boy. I don’t mind being ‘Cissy’ so much, you know, when we are alone, but some day you’ll be doing it before Collins, and servants are so terribly censorious. It is like calling a post-captain Jack, on his own quarter-deck, a thing which I once did myself.”

At these words a look of agony spread itself over Walter Croft’s face.

“Don’t look ferocious, Walter,” said the lady, “nautical Jack had no real existence, he was only a vain imagining, invented to tease you; and I’ve no right to tease you before lunch, lest I should take away your appetite; and you may call me Cissy as much as you like when we’re alone, but with servants one has to be so very particular, and a woman in my position can’t be too careful at home; in society it doesn’t matter a bit, for people always say nasty things, because they’ve nothing better to do; and of course everybody believes everything about everybody else; and Colonel Crawl, a retired Indian officer who lives opposite, actually *times* your visits. I’ve seen him do it, Walter. And oh, Walter, dear,” said the lady sentimentally, “I shall be so glad when you are of age, and all the worry and secrecy and fuss ’ll be over, and our engagement can be announced; for oh, Walter, I do hate

anything that is secret and underhand,” and then she looked as though she were going to cry.

Walter Croft immediately administered the necessary restorative; he kissed her, of course he did; and why shouldn’t he kiss the woman he loved, the woman he meant to marry in a month or two? For at present Walter Croft was only an infant in the eye of the law, and he was the ward of his father’s sole executor. When old Mr. Croft died, he had left full powers to Mr. Whitechurch, the boy’s guardian, and, without that guardian’s consent, the young man could not marry during his minority: and under the will of Walter Croft’s father, his guardian was placed absolutely in *loco parentis*. When he left school, his guardian gave him a handsome allowance; when from choice, and greatly to his guardian’s disgust, Walter had become John Milner’s pupil—because he had artistic yearnings, the allowance had been increased. When he attained his twentieth birthday, it had been raised to a thousand a year; and, at the time, instead of congratulating Walter, Milner had surlily remarked, “Your money ’ll be your millstone, my boy. Nobody ever heard of an artist, with an allowance of a thousand a year, who did any good.” Now Walter’s associates were his fellow art-students and the innumerable artistic friends of his friend and master, John Milner. The young fellow didn’t go much into society; when he did so, it was entirely on Mrs. Dacre’s account; the consequence was, that he had few expensive tastes, no debts, and no cares. Of his guardian, he saw next to nothing. Mr. Whitechurch was a stock-jobber; Mr. Whitechurch was sixty years of age; he looked upon his guardianship as an unmitigated nuisance, and he had told Walter Croft, the year before, that he was a busy man, and that he hated being disturbed. Young Croft took the hint, and didn’t trouble Mr. Whitechurch with his visits.

“Walter,” said Mrs. Dacre, “do you notice anything?” Then she blushed.

The faculty of blushing at will is a gift that is more precious than rubies. Mrs. Dacre possessed the gift; she could blush at pleasure, and she pointed to a blue band which encircled her slender waist, and then she said, blushing again, “I’ve ceased to be a magpie, Walter; I’ve gone into colours; and you ought to be very grateful, Walter, for it’s for your sake I do

it; and I hate half measures," she said, "and it's only when I turn round, you know, that you can appreciate the full depth of my iniquity. A white muslin is all very well for a young widow, but—even my dressmaker remonstrated as to the sash. But when a woman's very much in love, Walter," here she favoured him with a languishing glance from her big black eyes, the sort of glance which an enemy might call an ogle, "she isn't in a humour to take good advice—even from her dressmaker. Now, I've put it on to please you, Walter," she said, "and if you don't like it, you've only got to say so, and I'll take it off, and come back as a symphony in lavender, or mauve, and white."

"I'm sure it's very charming," said Walter, weakly.

Thereupon the lady made him a low curtsy and laughed a little, silvery laugh. "You've got to see my back yet, Walter," she said; and then she turned and walked towards the window. And then Walter perceived that the broad sash, which wasn't so particularly startling at the front view, though it was a rich *bleu de Roi*, made Mrs. Dacre's simple costume particularly festive as seen from behind. It was folded in pleats in some artful way in front, which narrowed the width of the wide ribbon of which the sash was formed, but behind it was tied in a huge Japanese butterfly bow, and the effect was startling; and Walter felt that, if he could measure the depth of Mrs. Dacre's affection by the width of the ribbon, and the splendour of the colour of the material of the sash, he was, indeed, a happy man.

"You approve?" said Mrs. Dacre, as she halted near the window, and favoured him with a sunny smile and one of those innocent girlish blushes she was always ready with.

"Of course I do," said Walter, who, though an artist, was fond of bright colours.

"I'm glad of that," said Mrs. Dacre, "and as we are both satisfied, a fig for Mrs. Grundy," and then she snapped her pretty fingers theatrically.

Then the prim Collins appeared and announced that lunch was ready. Young Croft gave Mrs. Dacre his arm, and Collins drew back the gorgeous Chinese *portière* of gold embroidered silk. The dining-room opened out of the drawing-room; you couldn't have dined more than

six people in that tiny dining-room, which very much resembled in size the state room of a hundred-ton yacht. Perhaps it was the "fitments" that gave one the idea; perhaps it was the great coved top of the little oak sideboard, or it may have been the big hanging lamp with the huge umbrella shade. The shelves and cupboards, and cornices too, of the overmantel, and the very small amount of wall space that was visible, made one almost expect to hear the first throb of the engine, or the hurrying feet of the sailors on the deck above.

Young Croft was very much in love, of course, but Collins being present, he had to dissemble his love; he wasn't quite one-and-twenty, and he did full justice to the very capital lunch that was set before him. And the two talked about things in general, and the last new play, and the Royal Academy; and Mrs. Dacre showed a beautiful desire to be either amused or instructed, and that, you know, is a line which is always highly appreciated by a very young man, particularly when the person who takes it is a pretty woman. She fooled him to the top of his bent, of course she did; being a woman, it was her business to do so.

It is very difficult to take in the ordinary novel-reader; the reader will have guessed that there was a screw loose in some way or other, about Mrs. Dacre. She had married at—don't start, reader, it was merely a financial screw that was loose—twenty, for position. When she had sold herself to old Mr. Dacre, she had done so deliberately. "It's very bad to be poor," she had said to herself; "it is hard for a pretty girl to have to wear dowdy dresses, to have to trim her own bonnets, and to teach in the Sunday School, and to vegetate in the country." Pretty Mrs. Dacre was the only daughter of a country clergyman, who had begun life as a scholar and a gentleman; he made a runaway match. After ten years' drudgery as a curate, he got a small college living in the dead heart of the utter country; then his wife died, and, as ill-luck would have it, just at that very time, somebody made him a present of a small cask of whiskey; from that day the Rev. Thomas Grimwood was never without a small cask of whiskey. In those small casks of whiskey of his, the Rev. Thomas Grimwood sought consolation for his poverty, for the loss of his wife, for his want of preferment, and for



his other woes. He found consolation there. The Rev. Thomas Grimwood was not popular in his parish; the big people who had tolerated him during his wife's life, for her sake, quietly dropped him at her death. He had always held his head high, and had declined to associate with the farmers; in fact, his very first sermon at Hogpen-in-the-Clay had given them great offence, for he had chosen as his text the sentence: "Now Cain was a tiller of the ground;" and every farmer and agricultural labourer present, had indignantly fitted on the cap; and from that day there was always a difficulty about the tithes. Her father looked upon Cissy as an incubus: if it hadn't been for Cissy he might, perhaps, have married again, and married well; many a deserving clergyman has found consolation in the clerical proverb that "a parson can marry anybody." But he soon found that the proverb didn't hold good of the parson with an encumbrance; to use a colloquialism, *that* was "an altogether different pair of shoes." He couldn't marry money, he couldn't earn money; he found the greatest possible difficulty in keeping body and soul together; he had no friends and no interests; therefore he did his work in a perfunctory manner, looking upon it as a punishment: and we know how he sought and found consolation.

Then old Mr. Dacre appeared upon the scene. Miss Cissy had her chance. Mr. Dacre called upon her father, and took a sudden liking to that gentleman. Within a fortnight he proposed for Cissy. "I'll allow her two hundred a year for pin money," he had said, "and I'll secure her ten thousand pounds on my death; but I'll not make a settlement, because I don't believe in settlements, they make the young wife of an old husband a great deal too independent." The Rev. Thomas Grimwood had no illusions; he agreed to the bargain. The next morning the vicar of Hogpen-in-the-Clay pointed out to his daughter, what he called "the course of duty." "You'll never have such another chance, Cissy," he said; "and with two hundred a year for pin money, you'll be able to do something for your poor old father, and brighten the evening of his life."

Now, let us be just to the girl. She was absolutely heart-whole; as yet no Prince Charming had ever brightened the dark-

ness of her dull and dreadful life; she had no friends, nothing to look forward to, nothing to hope for. Is it to be wondered at that she, too, accepted the bargain with enthusiasm?

"He's sixty-five if he's a day," her father had said, "that gives him in the ordinary course of things, say, five years. The man is a wealthy man. He has a magnificent house in Queen's Gate, he has neither chick nor child; and if you mind your P's and Q's, my dear, and behave yourself, he ought to leave you a rich woman."

"Oh, papa," Cissy had remarked, "don't talk like that."

"My dear, in matters of business," the vicar had replied, "it's no use beating about the bush. One thing is very certain, there will be no mistake about the ten thousand pounds. I will see to that."

Within the month there was a very quiet wedding at the little parish church of Hogpen-in-the-Clay. Mr. Dacre's legal adviser acted as his best man. The Rev. Thomas Grimwood read the service. After a particularly ill-cooked lunch at the vicarage, the happy pair left for the Continent in a hired fly. Of the married life of young Mrs. Dacre, the less said the better. There were frequent quarrels, for Mr. Dacre was an ill-tempered man, and young Mrs. Dacre was extremely fond of society, and inclined to extravagance. But she did her duty. Within three years of the marriage, old Mr. Dacre broke down. For two years his wife nursed him, and she had the good grace to give up society altogether. While her husband lived, Mrs. Dacre "brightened the evening" of the Rev. Thomas Grimwood's life to the extent of fifty pounds a year. Mr. Dacre was constitutionally a jealous man. His wife gave him no cause for jealousy, but the mere fact of the immense amount of attention she received, irritated him. When Mrs. Dacre was five-and-twenty, her husband died. She got the ten thousand pounds that had been secured to her by covenant, but nothing more. Then Mrs. Dacre dutifully doubled her father's allowance, upon the understanding that he was to remain quietly at the village of Hogpen, and that he was to "refrain from troubling" her; then she took the bijou house in Lexham Gardens, and lived at the rate of three thousand a year. This she did of set purpose, and with the deliberate intention of marrying money. She had met young Croft at a garden-

party; he had become fascinated at once, and now Cissy Dacre and Walter Croft were betrothed lovers.

"How is my portrait getting on, Walter?" said Mrs. Dacre, with real interest, when they had got back to the drawing-room and lunch was over.

"Your portrait is nearly finished; if it hadn't been for the mouth, I should have sent it home long ago. But do you know, Cissy, I found your mouth horribly difficult; I'd get it, or all but get it, when you were sitting; and then you'd smile, and I saw fresh beauties and became dissatisfied with my work at once. Your fitful smiles, Cissy, are like glorious cloud effects in a lovely sunset, each one more beautiful than the last—but it's just those fleeting effects which are so exceedingly difficult to render."

"Walter," said the lady, "they say that when you feed a person on flattery, you can't use too large a spoon. I'm bound to try and believe you, because I know you're very fond of me; and if I wasn't a wee bit weak in regard to you, Walter"—here the pretty blush was used with wonderful effect—"I should think that you were laughing at me."

"Laughing at you, Cissy?" cried the young fellow indignantly; "you're not the sort of woman that people laugh at."

"I suppose, then, I must take all you say for gospel," replied the lady. "And what does your crusty old mentor say of it?"

"Well," answered Walter doubtfully, "Milner doesn't say very much, you know, *he's* not the man to use a big spoon for his flattery in regard to his pupils; he said that I'd got the mouth right this morning. I was in luck, too, to-day; there was a new model turned up, a pretty little girl, in a namby-pamby sort of way," added the young fellow apologetically, "and she smiled a good deal, and I corrected your mouth by hers;" and then the unhappy boy felt that he was in up to his neck, and began to flounder wildly, as Mrs. Dacre clapped her hands and favoured him with a gentle, good-humoured girlish peal of silvery laughter; but, though she laughed, yet she was not overpleased; and it is just as well for lovers and others to remember, that when they are in the habit of making a goddess of any particular woman, that it doesn't do to ask the lady to step down from the pedestal for a single instant; and if Walter had been an observant young man, he would have

noticed that the little brown *peau de suède* shoe with the coral buckle, which had been innocently protruded, was impatiently beating what is generally known as the devil's tattoo.

"And so the young lady with the perfect mouth was very pretty?" said Mrs. Dacre. "You'll have to give up the figure subjects, Walter, when we are married; figure subjects mean models—models with surpassing beauty, and with perfect mouths, sir. You'll have to stick to either landscapes or portraiture, Walter, if you don't give up painting altogether, and settle down, as most men in your position would do."

"I'm sure I didn't mean——" blurted out the poor young fellow.

"Men never do mean, Walter," burst in the lady; "but you are younger than I am, you know; and it must be a dreadful thing to be tormented by the pangs of jealousy. I think, Walter, were you to give me cause for jealousy, that I should die;" and then she sighed. The words were spoken trippingly upon the tongue, and sounded as though they came from the heart. They were merely said with a purpose; Mrs. Dacre was simply "feeding the flame," so to say, and keeping Romeo up to concert pitch.

Then Walter seized her hand and began to protest; of course he did, poor wretch.

It is absolutely impossible to attempt to render the conversation that ensued between the pair during the next half hour. In the first place, there were very few words spoken; but then, as we all know, pantomime goes a long way, and eyes can say unutterable things. When two young people, who are very fond of each other, or affect to be at least, who are both well dressed, and both good-looking, who have eaten a capital lunch, *and* who are engaged to be married, are "spooning," they don't talk in blank verse like Romeo and Juliet; but they sigh, and stare at each other, and when they do talk it's idiotic nonsense—and that's the only word.

After a time the pair descended from the seventh heaven. Then Mrs. Dacre said, assuming an air of solemnity, "There's one thing I've always longed to ask you, Walter. Why does Mr. Milner dislike me?"

"Now you are talking nonsense, Cissy," replied young Croft; "Milner admires you."



1891

"CIRCLE."

"It won't do, Walter," said the lady, shaking her pretty head; "he doesn't like me, and he shows it. In order to mollify the man, I asked him if he would make a little head of me in oils; and I wanted to know what it would cost, that he might see that I meant paying for it. He didn't take the bait, though, he didn't even favour me with a nibble; he just turned round to that horrid Mr. Pargiter, who is ready to flatter anybody at so much a foot, and remarked sneeringly, 'You're the man to do Mrs. Dacre justice, Pargiter,' and then he fled, leaving me alone with the wretch Pargiter, who 'inspected' me, that's the only word; and he made a horrid clucking noise with his tongue, as a parrot does, when the inspection was over, and then paid me a fulsome compliment. I hate fulsome compliments from old men, Walter. But I can't understand why it is that Mr. Milner should do me the honour to dislike me. Do you know the real reason, Walter?"

"My dear Cissy," replied the young fellow, "Milner doesn't dislike you. Most men have a bee in their bonnets; Milner is, as you know, an enthusiast; *they* generally carry a whole hiveful in their heads; he thinks that an artist should sacrifice everything to his art. Only this morning he told me that I should never do any good, because I was well off; there, I suppose, to a certain extent, he's right. He's got a lot of stock phrases which he explodes on me when he's in a bad humour. 'No great artist ever painted in kid gloves' is one of them. But he doesn't mean it, and only this morning he actually complimented me on your portrait."

"What did he say?" cried Mrs. Dacre eagerly.

"Oh, I'd rather not tell you what he said," replied Walter enigmatically; "Vanity is a plant that does not require cultivation, which is another of Milner's sayings, Cissy," added the young fellow, with a smile.

Then the sound of carriage wheels which drew up at the door was heard.

"There's the carriage," cried Mrs. Dacre, rising. "Splinter says I mustn't keep the horses standing, so I'll go and put on my things."

"Say you love me once more, Cissy, before you go," said the young fellow with a sigh, which came from the very bottom of his heart.

Then he took both her hands, and holding her at arm's length gazed rapturously into her handsome eyes, and anxiously awaited her reply.

"Love you, you silly boy, of course I love you," said Circe; "I am going to give you a proof that I love you. A woman must love not wisely but too well, Walter, when she's ready to compromise herself to please the man she loves, and that's just what I am going to do to-day; for I am going to take you for a drive, Walter, if you will come, and my numerous friends will see us together, and bow in the nicest possible way, and remark under their breath, as I've heard them do before now, Walter, 'Little Mrs. Dacre is making a fool of herself over that handsome young artist.' And I suppose they're right, Walter, for when a woman's very much in love with somebody who is very nice and very clever, and whom she is very proud of—why then, I suppose, a woman is likely to make a fool of herself. Will you drive with me, Walter?"

Would a fish swim?

Of course he would come for a drive with her. Is it to be wondered at, in his gratitude to the woman who was making such tremendous sacrifices for his sake, that he drew her towards him and kissed her lovingly upon the lips. "Our marriage will silence them, dear," he said simply. "Poor little Cissy," he added, "we haven't long to wait." While Mrs. Dacre had left him to prepare for the drive, he could hear the two spanking chestnuts that drew her toy victoria, pawing the ground impatiently without; the chestnuts were young and full of oats, but they weren't half so anxious to be off as young Walter Croft, who was dying to occupy the seat which belonged of right to young Mrs. Dacre's toy terrier. It is a great thing to a very young man to think that a pretty woman is sacrificing herself for his sake. Cissy Dacre, like a wise woman, didn't keep her lover waiting; as a rule, ladies don't take half so long in dressing before, as after marriage—possibly that is because married ladies are so very anxious to please and do credit to the husbands whom they love so well.

As they were whirled away, they caught a glimpse of Colonel Crawl, who was lying in ambush behind the muslin curtains of the first floor windows of the opposite house.

"That's the sort of thing I have to put

up with on your account, Walter," said Mrs. Dacre plaintively.

They had the regulation drive round the park; and there wasn't a happier young fellow in town that day than Mrs. Dacre's affianced husband; he was so wrapped up in his own happiness that he took no more notice of the gaily-dressed crowd, and the fashionable equipages, than he did of the two drab great-coats with the resplendent brass buttons, belonging to Mr. Splinter and the footman, which hung down right in front of his nose in the regulation manner.

CHAPTER VII.

A SURPRISE AND A YARN.

"I do confess that I feel a little jealous of the girl who sits for the face, Mr. Croft; it's degrading to think that one's only a sort of clothes horse; in fact, I fancy that the lay figure would have served your turn just as well, if it hadn't been that Mr. Milner generously tries to throw as much work in my way as possible."

"Under-studies are proverbially jealous, Miss Fane," remarked young Croft, with noble condescension. "But if you saw the girl who sits for the face, I'm afraid you would be disappointed—it's just a face and nothing more; the raw material is a very different thing from the manufactured article. Purple and fine linen, and crisp frills and fallals, make all the difference in the world; and there's very little poetry in an untidy child of thirteen, with burst

boots. But that little model of mine's got such a pretty face, that I'm afraid I shall never succeed in doing justice to it. Poor little wretch, the child's only fifteen, with the face of a woman, and, probably, in a year or two, the glory will depart from that beautiful face, and the child will grow coarse and ugly. Beauty, of the angelic style, doesn't last, Miss Fane. And both

John Milner and I have to go to the life for our inspirations; we can't evolve beauty out of our inner consciousness, so we have to be slavish reproducers of nature, and strange to say, we are neither of us ashamed of it. Then, you know, I couldn't paint my model's hands, which are red and shapeless from cruel hard work; the hands are al-

ways a *crux* with us. You see, millers' daughters don't wear kid gloves, so one can't cover them up, and, as a

rule, for hands, one has to get a lady in the long run; and I'm not only at work upon the clothes, Miss Fane, but I'm trying to do your hands justice, but it's uphill work," said Walter Croft with a sigh, "for you've a very pretty hand."

He didn't say it as a compliment, it was simply the expression of what was passing through his mind at the moment; and young Croft was so intent upon his work,



THEY CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF COLONEL CRAWL.

that he did not notice that that last speech of his had made poor Phillida blush celestial rosy red.

"It seems to me, Mr. Croft," said the young lady, after a little pause, "that artists exaggerate a good deal; they idealise immensely. Here is your miller's daughter: you are not contented with the hands of your little model, so you proceed to improve upon nature by supplying her with somebody else's."

"Of course I do," replied young Croft, "because I'm painting an ideal portrait. You wouldn't have me a mere photographer in colours, would you?"

"Don't you think, perhaps, that in your search after ideal beauty, you lose truth and nature, and produce something else?"

"You mean that we attain artificiality," said Walter with a smile. "Perhaps we do, but if we succeed in striking the educated eye and pleasing it, we're satisfied. It isn't one picture in ten thousand, Miss Fane, that touches the heart. Lots of us play to the gallery, you know. Mr. Angell paints fat children, say; in the art of painting fat children he is *facile princeps*, and every British mother, who has, or has had, a fat child, appreciates Mr. Angell. Rose Madder concerns himself solely with the joys and sorrows of engaged couples. On his canvases the sympathetically beautiful model eternally simpers at the startlingly handsome model; both of them are dressed in the clothes of sixty years ago, because Rose Madder has established a sort of property in that period. The public know that if they see a picture of that particular period, of a highly sentimental nature, that it's bound to be by Rose Madder, or one of his imitators; for even Madder has imitators. You see every picture-buyer, male or female, must have had a sentimental period in his or her life, so Madder's pictures appeal to them, and they sell. Then there's Drumleigh, he's a very successful man simply because he caters for a very large class indeed, the class who like plenty for their money. He generally chooses a sacred subject; there's always plenty for the money, and he's very particular about his details, and is said to have boasted that in his great picture of the Retreat of the Ten Thousand, there were actually ten thousand figures; and when he had finished that masterpiece, he regretted that they didn't use artillery in those days, as the smoke

would have saved him such a lot of trouble. He's a man of ingenious mind too, for when the cotton-spinner, who bought the picture, objected that many of the warriors were using their left hands instead of their right, he declared that many of the Greeks were left-handed, and that in this particular battle, he had direct authority from Xenophon for stating that the Greeks fought so hard that, their right hands having grown tired, they were obliged to use their left. He made out that they were a sort of classical Widdingtons, you see. Of course the Manchester man was satisfied. The fact is, Miss Fane, that artists must live; they've got to please the public, and they've got to produce something that will sell. There's our friend, Mrs. Charnelhouse: she happens to be the fashion; she produces innumerable pretty trifles very rapidly; she never got more than a hundred guineas for a picture in her life; but at the year's end it mounts up, and Mrs. Charnelhouse makes a large income. Now there's the Boss: he doesn't care; he hasn't got a wife and family, he has no expensive establishment to keep up, he doesn't kill himself professionally by over-production, he won't take commissions, he declines to be patronised, and prefers to sell to the dealers. A man like that can afford to be conscientious. In the old days, you know, artists belonged to the lower middle class: now they all, or nearly all, go into society, as do their wives and daughters. Then they entertain largely, and they live in big houses in order to impress the public, and their studios are no longer the places in which they work; I'm sorry to say they are too frequently the raree-shows in which they pose and strut and swagger. Why, Show Sunday has become a sort of curse; people don't go to see the pictures, they go to see each other, and to eat pâté de foie gras sandwiches and drink Deutz & Geldermann's champagne, or to gorge themselves with forced strawberries. And what used to be a chance for the critics to see the pictures properly, has degenerated into a big function, and every outsider that you don't send a card to has his knife into you, as a matter of course. Why, buyers used to come on Show Sunday, and so hundreds of pictures were sold from the easel: now greedy and inquisitive people come for what they can get, and the buyer religiously stops away."

At this moment, John Milner walked into the studio; he nodded to Phillida, and then, going straight to Walter Croft's easel, inspected the Miller's Daughter very minutely; then he rather savagely criticised the drawing of the hands that his pupil had been working upon; then he lighted a big briar root pipe, and commenced upon one of his own canvases; then, without taking his eyes off his canvas, he addressed Phillida:

"Well, little Miss Fane," he said, "how do you like your new profession? Let me see, you must have been at it nearly a month. Have you got over your nervousness?"

"I'm delighted with my new profession, Mr. Milner," said Phillida, "and I don't know how to express my gratitude to you and Mrs. Charnelhouse."

"You needn't be grateful," growled out the artist; "what you get, you earn, and earn honestly."

"It's very kind of you to say so," said Phillida; "but if you hadn't introduced me to Mrs. Charnelhouse, and if you and she hadn't sent me to so many kind and liberal people, Mr. Milner, I don't think that I should have earned very much at my new profession. Artists don't care for novices as models, I fancy."

"Stuff," cried Milner. "You're a very pretty girl, Miss Fane, and very pretty girls are not as plentiful as blackberries in this happy England of ours. To tell you the truth, we've been very glad indeed to get you, and if you've anybody to thank at all, it's my cousin Adelaide. Anyhow, you've got over the pins-and-

needles stage by this time, and you're mastering the details of your duties."

"I try to do my best, Mr. Milner," said Phillida, with a blush, "because, you see, it makes such a difference to mother."

"That's the proper way to look at it," replied Milner. "I suppose they all talk nonsense to you, Miss Fane, and praise you outrageously, and try to turn your head," he added, with a keen glance at the girl from beneath his bushy eyebrows. "Don't believe them, my dear; as a rule, artists are outrageous humbugs."

"My patrons have all been very kind and nice to me, Mr. Milner," said Phillida, simply.

"Ugh," grunted out Milner.

"You're not too charitable, Boss," said Walter, with a smile.

"I wasn't alluding to you, boy," replied the elder man. "There's nothing dangerous about Walter, Miss Fane, because he's going to be married."

Something caused Phillida on this announcement to clasp her hands suddenly,

a fact which was instantly perceived by young Mr. Croft, who cried out irritably, "Oh, Miss Fane, you've got your fingers all wrong." And then he had to rise from his stool and put the taper fingers into position again; and as his hand touched hers, somehow or other the girl grew nervous, and blushed and trembled.

"It's very hot," she said, and then she sighed.

Now it isn't insinuated for a moment that Mrs. Fane's daughter was "in love" with young Croft; but when it is announced to a young lady that the best-looking and nicest of all her youthful male



ARTISTS' MODELS (THE RAW MATERIAL).

acquaintances is engaged to somebody else, she always does blush and tremble. Ask any girl, and if she be an honest girl, she will testify to the truth of this statement. The reason for this is very simple. Every girl looks upon the nicest and best-looking of her male acquaintances as a sort of first prize in the lottery of love. Every sensible person who holds a ticket in a great lottery—the greatest of all lotteries is the lottery of love—knows that it is long odds against their winning the first prize: they will be happy indeed if they get a prize at all; but should they attend the drawing, and hear suddenly that the first prize has been won by somebody else, unless they are stocks or stones they will suffer a momentary pang. Poor Phillida was neither a stock nor a stone, and the sudden announcement of young Croft's engagement caused her a certain amount of natural disappointment. It hardly amounted to what Americans call "mental anguish"—she was only a girl, you see.

Then, as Phillida sat in silence, she wondered that she had not been aware of the fact long before; she remembered the picture that Walter had been working upon, where she had had her first short sitting, on that dreadful day when John Milner had forgotten her very existence; she remembered, too, that the numerous sketches which hung about in the corner of the studio occupied by young Croft, were invariably sketches of a tall and handsome woman, a fashionable beauty, with hard and cruel eyes. Now, she intuitively felt that these were sketches of Walter's betrothed, and there was one feeling, and one feeling only, in her mind, as she realised the situation—she felt sorry for Walter. We all know that pity is akin to love, but it must not

be supposed for an instant that Phillida Fane was "smitten" with Walter Croft. The real fact was that Phillida liked the young fellow very much indeed; she had been struck at first, of course, by his good looks; the fact of his being exceedingly well-dressed had perhaps not tended to make her like him any the less. Both he and Milner had been very kind to her; they had treated her as

an equal and a friend, rather than as a model, and that makes all the difference, you know; both of them had manifested a distinct interest in her success in her new occupation. They had chatted unreservedly before her, and she had taken part in their talk, and already artistic "shop" had come to have a strange fascination for the girl. It must be confessed that, as she turned the news of Walter's engagement over in her mind, she was lost in thought; and it was only after a while that she became aware that Milner was narrating a history to his pupil. Then she dismissed the thought of Walter and the woman with the cruel eyes from her mind, and began to listen to what John Milner was saying.

"Jack Vaughan was an Impressionist," said Milner. "You will guess from this that in the eyes of the majority of us the measure of his iniquity was full. Don't we know perfectly well that Wash, Mahlstick, and Scraper go

down into the country every year, and toil through the heat of the day surrounded by midges, gnats, wasps, and agricultural boys, sitting in the sun for many hours upon triangular camp stools as though they had been impaled? And then they come back to town, each having painted what he calls 'A Field of Corn, with Poppies.' All three pictures are very much alike; they are



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ARTISTS' MODELS (ARTIFICIAL GRACE).

terribly correct, and there is no mistake about each individual wheat-ear in the foreground ; and as to the poppies, they are nearly as large as life, and twice as natural. Now these three men, for what is practically the same thing, get respectively fifty guineas, thirty guineas, and ten guineas, for their fortnight's work. They have toiled, have suffered, and have returned to town looking like copper-coloured American Indians ; and then that young villain, Jack Vaughan, sitting calmly in his comfortable little studio, would produce what he called a symphony in gold and scarlet, carefully 'fudge' the sky, and deliberately label it 'A Field of Corn, with Poppies,' and then, for his two days' work, fashionable people will be quite ready to pay him just as much as they gave Wash, Mahlstick, and Scraper, for the results of their fourteen days' honest toil. Is it to be wondered at that these three painters hated Jack Vaughan, and called him a quack ?

"But outside the profession Jack Vaughan's success was immense. The women swore by him (he was good-looking, you see), and even the dealers found it worth while to take his work—his things went off so quickly

"As you know, there are no more charitable people in the world than artists ; we are always sending the hat round among ourselves for those of our number who have come to grief. Stippler was a very good fellow, highly popular, always very hard up ; and Stippler died, leaving a widow and eight young children. It was a very sad case ; the hat was sent round for the benefit of Stippler's widow and orphans, and all Stippler's friends contributed. But it was resolved to do more than this. A committee was formed, and it was determined that every man who called himself a friend of the late Dick Stippler should contribute a picture ; that the whole should be exhibited for the benefit of the widow and her children, and that the pictures themselves should be sold, and the proceeds should be devoted to the same benevolent object.

"A meeting was held at the Chiaroscuro Society's Rooms. It was an enthusiastic gathering. Everybody promised something ; and within a fortnight there were four hundred works sent in to the Secretary of the Stippler Fund, and they literally covered the walls of the rooms of the Chiaroscuro Society. Every style of art

was represented. In high art, there were no fewer than three Alfred the Greats ; the sordid school was there, with its studies from low life in the East end ; there were life studies with the clothes and accessories in elaborate detail, and other life studies with no clothes to speak of ; the depicors of character were to the fore with figures of old men and women all hair and wrinkles ; members of the Kanoozer Club sent men in armour, while the beauty-men made a tremendous show ; there were landscapes innumerable ; and the great Mr. Piedpiper himself, the chief of all the Impressionists, contributed a wonderful arrangement of olive-green and black, with a specially designed frame of oxidised silver on a purple plush back, which he called 'Moses in the Bulrushes.' There was some greeny-yellow water with a tremendous bulrush in the foreground, and mysterious shadows and mist, and a rising moon or a setting sun ; but as for Moses, being the work of an Impressionist, he was left to the imagination of the spectator. A great many of the pictures were without their frames, which were, of course, to be sent down as soon as they were finished ; and the whole of the walls of the Chiaroscuro Society's Rooms were covered from floor to ceiling, and the pictures which they could not hang were stacked in the corners ; and the exhibition for the benefit of Stippler's widow promised to be a great success.

"Now the Chiaroscuro Society meets three nights in the week. Sometimes they paint from the life ; and there's a gas-burner for every man, and a stool. Sometimes a subject is given out, and each man works it according to his own fancy ; and at the end of a couple of hours the sketches are handed round and criticised—praised or blamed, as the case may be. And some very good work is done at the C. S. ; and many a picture that has sold for three figures has been commenced at those two-hour meetings of the Society. It's a wonder how they can see to paint, with the amount of tobacco smoke in the place ; but they do, and it is a great privilege to the outsider to go to one of the smoking concerts at the C. S.

"Now young Vaughan had sent a little thing for the Stippler Fund, which he called 'The Lights of London.' It was a twenty-four twelve. There was a dark mass in the middle—that was the dome of St. Paul's ; there were four chimneys

vomiting forth smoke, faintly indicated in the foreground; and there were little yellow dots all over the picture—those at the top were stars, those at the bottom were street lamps. Jack worked at it for at least six hours, and then, being an Impressionist, he felt that 'it would be wicked to add to it.' And Picdpiper, when

forgotten. One night the Society met to paint from the life. William Muggles, the prize-fighter, *in puris naturalibus* (I put it so, Walter, because ladies don't as a rule understand Latin), was posing as Ajax defying the lightning; and eighty fellows were hard at work, with canvases and millboards, in reproducing the biceps, &c.,



THE CHIAROSCURO SOCIETY.

he saw it, shook Jack warmly by the hand, and told him that it was a 'dream of loveliness.' And Jack went out and ordered a frame, and then he took it down in a hansom cab to the C. S.; and a day or two afterwards the four hundred pictures were sent down to the Saxon Artists' Gallery, and the hanging process commenced, but, by some accident, Jack's canvas was

of Mr. Muggles as Ajax. In came that distinguished realist, Mr. Ussher. He hung up his hat and coat, and then he began to look about for something to paint on. 'Binks,' cried Mr. Ussher, 'where's my new canvas? I sent it down this afternoon;' and Binks, the porter, and Ussher searched in vain for the new canvas, twenty-four inches by twelve.

"'Here you are, sir,' said Binks, as he came upon 'The Lights of London,' a new canvas, twenty-four by twelve. 'Someone's been playing the fool with it,' cried Ussher indignantly, as he looked at the picture upside down. Then he held it longways. 'Looks as if something had been spilled on it, sir,' said Binks, pointing to the dome of St. Paul's. 'Some enemy has done this thing,' cried Ussher. 'Give me a cloth, Binks;' and Mr. Ussher began to rub away with a will.

"Most of the yellow dots disappeared.

"'My new canvas is ruined,' said Ussher indignantly; and he deliberately proceeded to reprime it with a thick layer of copal varnish and flake white, and then he stood it near the stove to dry. In twenty minutes it was perfectly hard, and in an hour and a half Mr. Ussher had finished Ajax all but the feet; and then in walked Jack Vaughan with a splendid new frame, on which was a neat little label in gilt—

THE LIGHTS OF LONDON: A Memory.
JOHN VAUGHAN.

Jack walks straight up to the secretary of the Stippler Fund, and slapped him on the back.

"'I've brought the frame, old man!' he said.

"'What frame?' asked the secretary anxiously.

"'Why, the frame for that little thing of mine for the Stippler show; they told me at the Saxons that it must still be lying here. Anyhow, they haven't got it.'

"Mr. Ussher, who was putting the finishing touches to Ajax, began to tremble, though whether it was horror at what he had done, or internal laughter, is a little doubtful.

"'You'd better price it at twenty guineas,' said Jack to the secretary: 'it ought to fetch that, and I have paid three pounds for the frame.'

"Then Mr. Ussher ceased to chuckle and began to swear inwardly. Binks, who was standing by, looked guiltily at Ussher; but Ussher placed his finger on his lips, and Binks winked.

"When the members had left, Ussher took the secretary of the Stippler Fund by the button-hole, and told his dreadful secret. They wiped Ajax out, and then they tried to get off the copal and flake-white; but the thing resembled a sheet of bath enamel in stony hardness. Ussher,

the secretary, and Binks sat up all night with the unfortunate canvas: by means of oil of lavender they succeeded in coming down upon what was left of the original picture. There never had been much of it; and now there was absolutely nothing but a great grey smudge. They put it upside-down into the frame, and the three men stared at it dismally.

"'You'd better buy it, Ussher; it's the only way of getting out of the mess,' said the secretary.

"'I'll see it hanged first,' said Ussher, moodily. 'You can just hang it as it is.' Then he put on his hat and coat, and left.

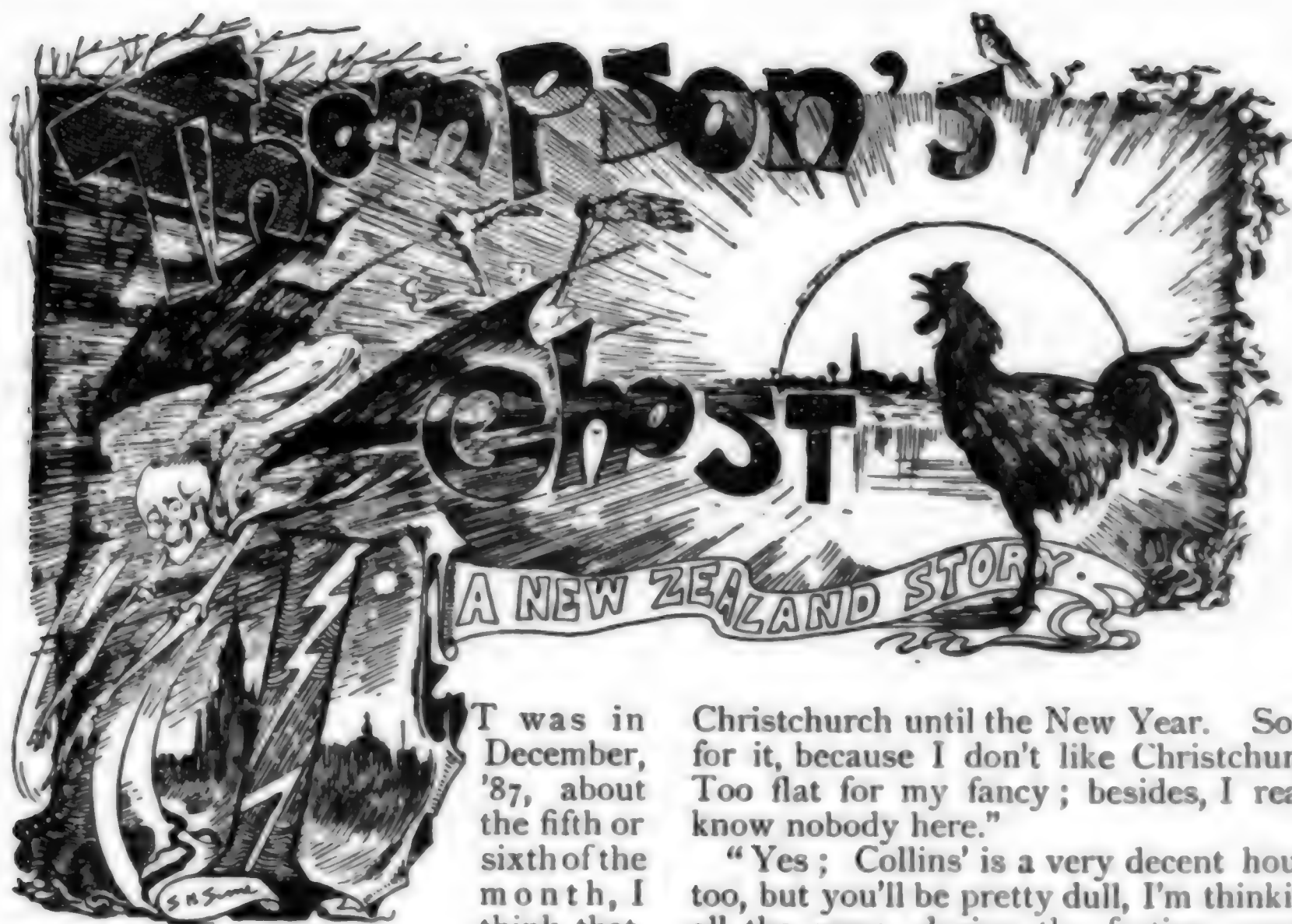
"Binks took the picture down to the Saxons that morning, and the hanging committee looked at it in astonishment and awe; but they found room for it in a dark corner, and at eleven o'clock the exhibition was thrown open to the public. There was quite a crowd round 'The Lights of London' by twelve, and nobody could make head or tail of the picture. And then in came Piedpiper, talking very learnedly and very loudly; with him, drinking in his every word, were Ulysses P. Worleybone, the great American millionaire, the man who had made a colossal fortune in pork, and his daughter, Sophonisba; she was a girl who followed the latest craze, and always described herself as a 'yearner after the Infinite.'

"'Oh, Mr. Piedpiper,' said Sophonisba Worleybone, 'do explain to us this charming little picture,' and she indicated 'The Lights of London.'

"The crowd stood aside to make room for the great Mr. Piedpiper—all save Mr. Ussher, who threw himself into the attitude of the first Napoleon, and crossed his arms and rolled his eyes in a tragic fashion.

"'The Lights of London,' said Mr. Piedpiper, with an explanatory wave, but not looking at that mysterious work, 'is a wonderful picture, Miss Worleybone, it is a poem.' And everybody stared at Mr. Piedpiper, and Mr. Ussher's eyes rolled more fiercely than before. 'It must be looked at with the eye of faith. Gaze into the depths of that picture, Miss Worleybone, and beneath the darkening pall which hangs over the great city, those who have souls will almost hear the hum of men and the tramp of busy feet. Your father couldn't do better, my dear young lady, than secure a great work like this,' said the oracle.

(To be continued).



I was in December, '87, about the fifth or sixth of the month, I think, that, turning the corner of Cathedral Square, Christchurch, New Zealand, and walking briskly as is my wont, I came bump up against somebody approaching from the opposite direction. The collision was a smart one. My stick dropped from my hand; my hat rolled off and reclined gracefully in the gutter. My temper is as sweet as lump sugar as a general thing, but it gets ruffled sometimes. It got ruffled then. I was on the point of expressing myself more forcibly than politely, when I recognised in the supposed stranger my old friend and shipmate Theodolite, the surveyor.

"Where on earth did you spring from?" asked Theodolite, shaking me heartily by the hand. "Thought you had gone home to England. Come into Warner's and have a wet. Do you know I always considered you were pretty hard-headed, and you have just given me a striking proof of it. You bumped up against me with the force of a battering ram, and I really must take something to soothe my shattered nerves."

While we were "taking something," my ancient ally happened to remark,

"By the way, where are you staying?"

"At Collins' hotel. As you are aware, I am a bird of passage, here to-day and gone to-morrow, as a rule; but on this occasion, circumstances over which I have no control will compel me to remain in

Christchurch until the New Year. Sorry for it, because I don't like Christchurch. Too flat for my fancy; besides, I really know nobody here."

"Yes; Collins' is a very decent house, too, but you'll be pretty dull, I'm thinking, all the same, during the festive season. Tell you what. Come down to me, and spend a week or so under canvas. My last year's holiday-making in town came a trifle expensive, and this year I am going to stick to the camp. If you will come



I CAME BUMP UP AGAINST SOMEBODY.

and put up with me it will be a charity. My fellows will probably be away, but I can ask a couple of boys to come over from Winslow and join us. Plenty of tucker, and lashings of grog. What d'ye say? Let it be yes, and we'll have just one more to seal the bargain; and then, old man, I must leave you. I have got to report myself at headquarters this morning."

I closed with the offer at once, begging Theodolite to make a note of the invitation because, although the most hospitable fellow in the world, he has the very worst memory of any man I know.

He said there was no fear of his forgetting, and that he should keep a bright look out for me on Christmas Eve. And so we parted.

As my readers doubtless remember, December is the height of the summer in Australasia.

* * * *

It wanted a few minutes to six o'clock on the evening of December 24th, when the train from Christchurch set me down at the Hinds station. The Hinds is a tiny township at which but few strangers are ever seen. It was this fact, probably, that caused the stationmaster to eye me so curiously as I walked up the platform towards him, bag in hand.

"Good evening, can you direct me to Mr. Theodolite's Camp?"—this was obeying Theodolite's instructions.

"You mean the survey chaps?"

I intimated that I did mean the survey chaps.

"Why, it's a matter of ten or twelve miles across the tussocks."

And Theodolite had talked about the walk from the station as if it was a mere hop step and jump! That is a way colonial surveyors have got. They generally walk like professional "peds," and expect everybody else to do the same.

"Well, how do I get there?"

I was on the Canterbury Plains. A sea of yellow tussocks (*i.e.*, a sort of tough, coarse grass) stretched away on all hands as far as the eye could reach, and a good deal farther. In the dim distance rose huge mountain ranges. Winding through the tussocks like a great snake lay the Ashburton River, its bed bare and dry in many places at this hot season, and its banks fringed with tall flax bushes. Of trees there were hardly any to be seen.

And there are men who pass their lives in these solitudes, and are happy and contented!

"How do I get there?"

Don't know Lamson's paddock, I suppose?"

"Can't say I do. I was never in these parts before."

"Ah, I thought you were a new chum. Then you don't know Thompson's—Bill Thompson's, where the murder was?"

I was again obliged to plead ignorance. I could see that I suffered in the estimation of the stationmaster after that. He evidently regarded me as a very poorly-informed person.

"Who was Thompson, anyhow?" I asked with conscious shame. Not to know Thompson seemed to argue oneself unknown. "Who was Thompson, and whom did he murder?"

"He didn't murder anyone," replied the stationmaster, with quiet contempt; "he was murdered himself."

I was seized with a morbid curiosity to learn all about Thompson, and the manner of his demise, but suddenly remembering that Theodolite would be sure to know the story, and that I was losing time, I said, "Well, if you can give me any sort of a notion as to the direction I ought to take, I shall feel obliged, as I am rather anxious to fetch the camp before dark."

He led the way out of the station, and pointed with a stumpy forefinger to a little, almost invisible, track.

"You see that track?"

I had to look pretty sharply at it before I could conscientiously say "yes."

"Well, you just follow that track. It'll take you across the river—the bed's dry in places. The paddock where the survey chaps are camped is about a mile from the house, and surrounded by a high ti-tree hedge. You can't miss it, if you keep to the track."

"And, of course, if I can't see the paddock, they will be able to put me right at the house?"

The stationmaster laughed as in scorn.

"Why, there's no one there. The place is empty. Been shut up since Thompson was murdered years ago."

I hurriedly said "Good evening," and took the track. I felt that stationmaster knew too much for me.

The Hinds township comprised a blacksmith's forge, a general store, a few small cottages, and the stationmaster's house.

But as I gradually left it behind me, I felt as if I were leaving the world.

The antipodean twilight is a short one, and with darkness setting in, and not a sign or a sound of a living creature near me, the solitary tramp across the dew-laden tussocks was not a particularly lively one.

As I jogged steadily along, my favourite briar in full blast, I found myself thinking of Thompson, wondering what manner of man he was—or rather had been—and how he came to be murdered.

I suppose it was while thinking about Thompson that I got off the track. By-and-bye I sighted a wooden shanty to the left and close to the river, and made for it. It was a lonely-looking place, surrounded by a post and rail fence. The windows were both broken, and the roof was in holes. What had at one time been perhaps a trim garden was now a weedy wilderness. This was just the sort of place where a murder might have been done—delapidated, dirty and deserted. I didn't stop long.

It suddenly occurred to me that Thompson's ghost might be keeping up Christmas Eve in its own way, and that my presence might appear intrusive.

So I re-lit my pipe, and crossing the river bed—no difficult matter, owing to the drought—took observations for the paddock. Fortunately the moon now shone bright and clear, and enabled me to "spot" the high ti-tree hedge. I had feared I was a long way off the track. The sight of the hedge cheered my drooping spirits. I opened my bag, pulled out a flask, and drank my health, and wished myself a merry Christmas and many of 'em. Then I pushed on, eager to get to

the boys; for, truth to tell, I soon tire of my own society, and, by this time, I had had more than enough of it.

In due course I reached the paddock. It was about an acre in extent, and—yes, there was the tent all taut and snug, up in the corner, completely sheltered from the wind—it knows how to blow on the Canterbury Plains, let me tell you—and with the moonbeams playing on its sloping sides, and turning them to a dazzling white.

But there were no sounds of revelry, all was as silent as the grave.

"Very odd," thought I, "they can't have turned in. Why, it's not nine o'clock, and Christmas Eve, too!" Then, all at once, it struck me it was a practical joke. They had heard me coming, and this was their humorous way of receiving me. The funny dogs!

When I reached the tent and pulled aside the "fly," I fully expected to be greeted with roars of boisterous laughter. That was Theodolite all over. But I was greeted with nothing of the kind. I struck a match and peered into the tent. It was empty.

Not feeling by any means disposed to retrace my steps to the Hinds, I walked into the tent, and, colonial-fashion, made myself at home. I found a candle stuck in a beer bottle, and lighting up, had a good look round. It was a comfortably arranged tent, containing four bunks—low wooden frames with canvas sacking nailed across them, a small rough deal table, evidently of home manufacture, with legs firmly embedded in the floor, and lots of blankets and rugs. Beneath the table was a long, wooden box. Guessing that this was the larder, I pulled off the lid. The larder it was. Not much in it, though,



I SIGHTED A WOODEN SHANTY.

considering that it was Christmas-time. Some bread, cheese, jam, and a baked leg of mutton, nearly entire, together with sundry tins containing salt, pepper, mustard, sugar, coffee, tea, etc. Continuing my explorations, I went out into the paddock, nearly stumbling, presently, over a sod fire-place. Resting on the ashes was a big "billy," *i.e.*, a sort of saucepan, with a wire-hoop handle, like a beer-can, much affected by Colonials. This billy proved to be nearly half-full of tea, and it was not yet cold. Hurrah! I should manage famously until the boys came back. But where could they be?

I had the best tea I could manage, and then, carefully selecting the most comfortable bunk, I turned in, having the whisky handy—oh, yes; I found it!—and the candle on the low table at my elbow. Then I lit my pipe. Just as I was re-arranging my pillows, I felt something hard. It was a book. I thought, at first, it might be one of Theodolite's field-books. But it wasn't. It was Poe's "Tales of Mystery." I should have preferred something livelier, but as I could find nothing else in the shape of literature, save a torn and tattered copy of a weekly newspaper of remote date, I gladly renewed my acquaintance with Edgar Allan. There is in that famous collection of blood curdlers a gruesome story, yclept "The Black Cat." It relates how a man murdered his wife and bricked her up, and how the crime was traced home to the murderer through the agency of a black cat. It is a particularly horrible tale. I read it that night once more. When I had finished, my thoughts travelled back to Thompson. I am not a particularly nervous man, but I did feel upset a bit that night. I am of a sociable disposition, and I wanted somebody to talk to. The strange and continued absence of Theodolite and his men puzzled me too. What had become of them; had Thompson's ghost anything to do with their disappearance? "Well," thought I to myself, as I reached for the whisky bottle, "this is a merry Christmas." I had a good stiff nip, blew out the light, and went to sleep, to dream of black cats, deserted houses, Thompson's ghost, and other cheerful things.

It must have been in the middle of the night that I suddenly awoke. I had heard no footstep, no sound of any kind, and yet I was distinctly conscious of someone's presence in the tent. Did you ever ex-

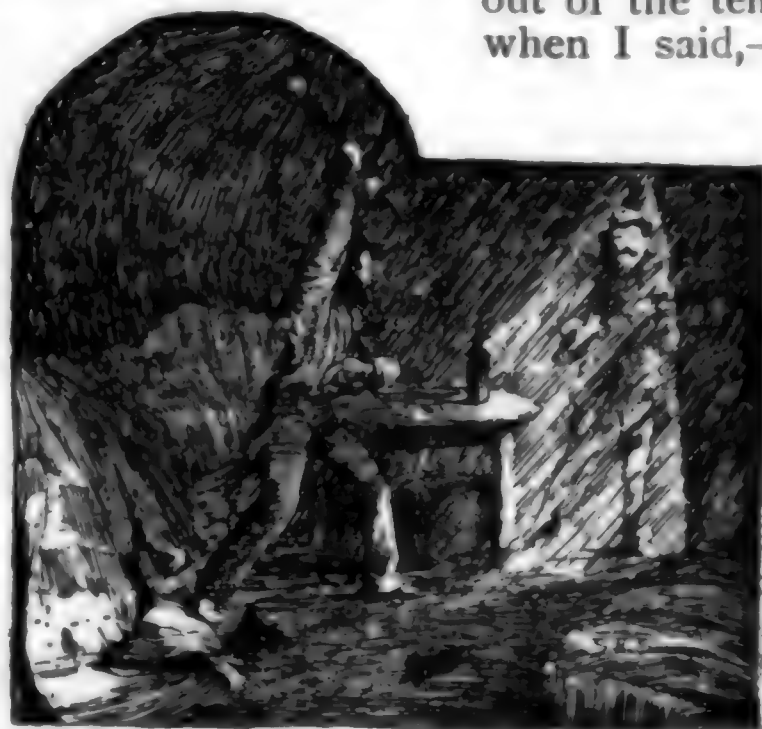
perience the feeling? It is not pleasant, is it?

I was wide awake in a second, but thought it wiser to sham sleep until I could learn more. Gradually, as my eyes became accustomed to the darkness, I made out a figure. No, it was not in white; it appeared to be in black, or in something dark, at any rate. It was sitting on the bunk facing mine, the table being between us. The head appeared to be bent, as though resting on the hands.

"Looks a good deal like the kind of man Thompson must have been," thought I; "if it is Thompson, I don't think he is doing the square thing by a new chum. Why doesn't he haunt his own place?"

Cautiously grasping an axe handle that lay on the floor by the side of my bunk, I suddenly jumped out of bed and gave a rousing "coo-ey!"

The silent figure was on its feet in the fraction of a second, and was bolting out of the tent when I said,—



I SUDDENLY JUMPED OUT OF BED.

"Who are you, mate? Where d'ye come from? What d'ye want?"

Something in the tone of my voice, I suppose, reassured the mysterious stranger. He paused. Then he turned to me.

"I am swagging it" (to "swag it" is to tramp the country with your blankets in a roll, or swag, strapped to your back), "and came to this paddock intending to lie under the hedge out of the wind until morning. I certainly did not expect to find a tent here. At first I thought it was unoccupied. I came in to see, feeling I could do with a feed if there was any tucker left knocking about. Then I saw you, and while thinking whether I should waken you or not, you settled the matter by

waking of your own accord. Pray pardon me. If you can give me anything to eat I shall be most grateful, for I have walked ten hours and hours without breaking my fast."



THEODOLITE STOOD STOCK STILL WHEN HE SAW ME.

His last words reassured me. "Then you are *not* Thompson's Ghost?"

He laughed, and we were soon quite "chummy." A nicer fellow I never chanced on. We made a night of it, and next day—Christmas Day—there being still no sign of Theodolite and party, we made a day of it. I shot a brace of wild ducks up the river bed. We baked them in the camp oven, and "Thompson's Ghost," as I christened him, made a very excellent plum duff. We had a billy of boiled potatoes, another of tea, whiskey galore, and pipes without number. Merry Christmas? Well, I have spent worse.

"Thompson's Ghost" was capital company, and yet I could plainly see that he had something on his mind. Every now and then he would grow silent and moody. Then, as if by a great mental effort, he would brighten up, and become quite animated again. He was a capital hand at telling a yarn, and he had an inexhaustible stock of them, too. He had knocked about the colonies a lot, and appeared to have mixed with all sorts of people. But all his roughing hadn't knocked the gentleman out of him. Towards nine o'clock on Christmas night, and after it had grown dark, he got up suddenly, and said, "Well, old man, I must be moving. I have got a long journey before me. I am sorry to have to part company. It is a long time since I enjoyed myself so much. I shall not forget our meeting, or you. Good-bye!"

I tried to persuade him to stop the night, but it was no use. I was sorry to see him go. We had a "doch-an-dorrish," and shook hands like old chums.

I was awakened next morning about six o'clock, by the sound of voices outside. It was Theodolite and his mates, with a mounted trooper.

Theodolite stood stock still when he

saw me. "Why, bless my soul," he cried at last, "here's a pretty go! I invited this fellow to come and spend Christmas under canvas"—turning to his chums—"and clean forgot all about it! Well, if I haven't the vilest memory. Mrs. Moorhen sent down an invitation—an awfully pressing one, too, old chap" (addressing me), "for all hands to go up to the station for Christmas Day. We went over on Christmas Eve. I was so full up of our luck in getting asked, that I couldn't think of anything else. And that's how it was. It's nearly a month since I met you in Christchurch, you see. I plead that as an extenuating circumstance, and throw myself on the mercy of the court. How did you manage for tucker?"

I soon set Theodolite's conscience at rest. "But what," said I, "does the man in blue do here?—anybody 'wanted?'"

"Why, yes, sir," said the representative of the law, stepping to the front, "somebody is wanted, rather particular. Did you have a visitor here yesterday?"

"Y—yes," said I, hesitatingly, as I thought of my companion of the day before, "but you can't want Thompson's ghost?"

They all laughed at this. As for me, I was never more serious in my life.

"It's no ghost, but flesh and blood, I'm after, sir," replied the trooper. "How does this fit him?" Here he read a printed description of my late mate. There could be no mistake. The description "fitted" him to a "t."

"But what has he done? What is he wanted for?"

"Embezzlement."

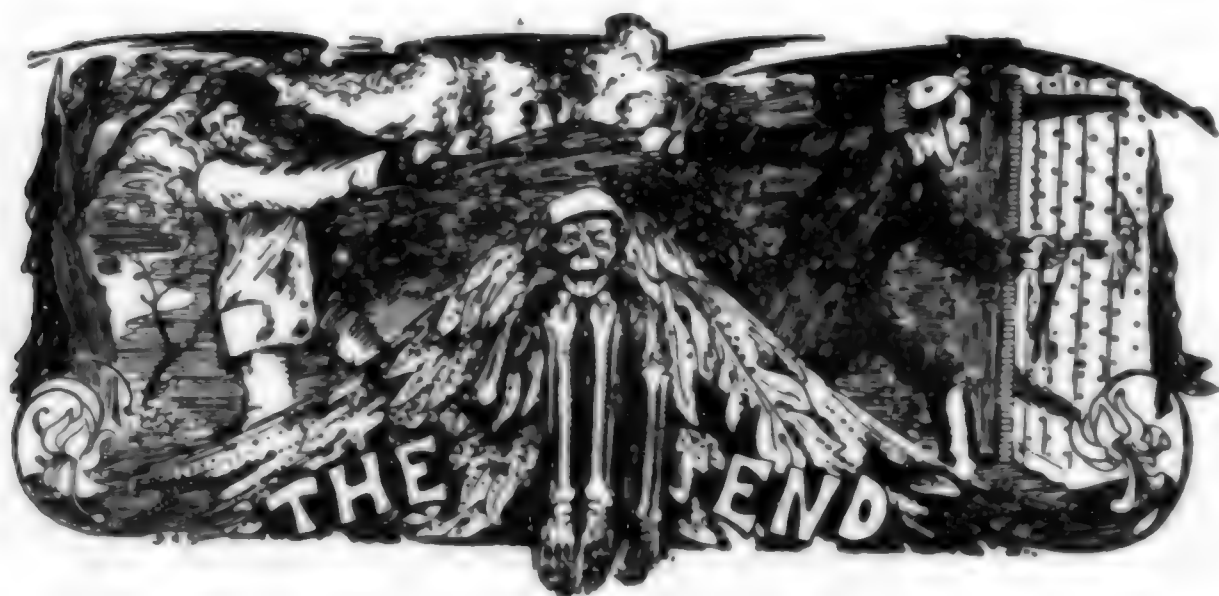
"You don't say so? What is his name?"

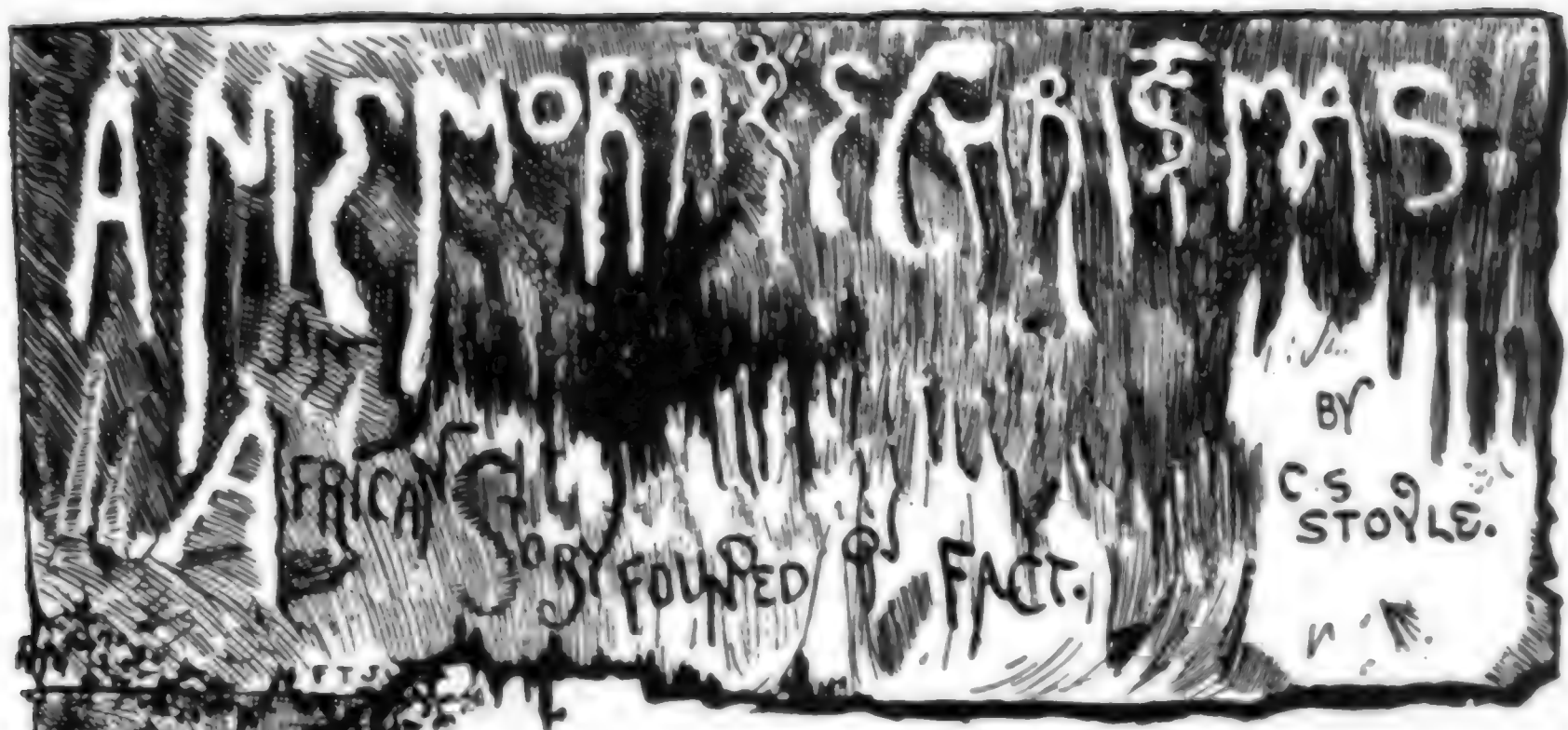
"Tom Robson, *alias* Tom Macfarlane. And now, sir, I have no time to lose, which way did he head when he left the camp?"

I am afraid my reply was not strictly accurate. If I acted wrongly, I couldn't help it. My sympathies were all on the side of the culprit.

The deception was, however, without avail. They ran their quarry to earth a mile or two this side of Timaru.

I stopped a day with Theodolite, at his particular request. He did everything that was in his power to make up for his former forgetfulness, but I had no heart for any more merry-making. I was thinking all the time of "Thompson's ghost." Poor beggar! He was more sinned against than sinning, as it afterwards came out. But that didn't save him. He was tried at Christchurch Supreme Court, and got four years.





CHAPTER I.—IN THE CRYSTAL CAVES.

WE were a happy party, as we sat on the veldt overlooking the grand old Barberton hills, in front of Mrs. Richards' hospitable tent. Christmas was drawing near, and as fever was very prevalent, Mr. Richards intended returning to his farm with Mrs. Richards, their daughter, Mabel, and his niece, Ada Richards. It was Sunday, and Joe Randall, Tom Hilton, and I, Jack Mannerley, had been spending the day with them, as we had arranged to accompany them up to their farm, and then we were going on to Pretoria. We three had been prospecting for gold, and had lately come across what promised to turn out a rich vein of the precious metal, and we determined to go up to Pretoria and arrange for the opening up of the mine on a large scale, or perhaps for its sale. Randall was to remain with the two young Richards, to secure the claims from being jumped meanwhile; but they were coming part of the way with us, and so spend Christmas day together. On our way we proposed visiting some underground caves that we had heard about. Our driver, Gnattusia, had told us wonderful stories about their beauty and riches. We struck camp next morning, and started for our holiday, full of good spirits, and intending to have a fine time.

We arrived at our destination two days before Christmas, but that was none too

early, so the ladies assured us; for they had much to prepare, as they intended giving us a real good Christmas dinner, and with the limited means at command this meant a good deal of work.

We men of the party were ordered off on a shooting expedition, for we had brought no meat with us. We were fortunately pretty successful, and returned with a good supply of game, for birds and bucks were then plentiful.

We were astonished next morning to learn from Cleanboy, one of Mr. Richards' men, that our driver, Gnattusia, had been away all night, and had not yet returned—we wanted his help to clear the way to the caves. On our arrival he had pointed out the entrance, but still, we should have been glad of his guidance and help, and could not understand what kept him away.

Early Christmas morning we were all astir packing up, for we intended having our dinner in the caves, and spending the day in exploring its dark depths.

We had all been busy the day before, clearing the opening, and making the descent as easy as possible for the ladies; where it was very steep, we had fixed rope ladders, or cut rough steps; it was much overgrown, though it had the appearance of having been, at one time, well dug out, and the walls properly built up; but that must have been so long ago, that time had destroyed most of the ancient work, and we could only trace it here and there.

The getting down was no laughing matter to Mrs. Richards, and I don't think

she would have attempted it for her own pleasure; but she well knew how disappointed we should all have been, had she elected to have remained in the camp, and so, like the dear old soul she was, made the best of it, and came.

We were well provided with candles, and lanterns; the room or cave we intended to dine in, we had fitted up the day before, and when it was well lighted it looked very beautiful; it was a kind of antechamber to a very large and beautiful hall of white crystal, the roof of which was so high, we could hardly see it by the dim light of the candles, and so large, we could not attempt to light it properly; the roof was supported by large and massive crystal columns, so regularly and beautifully formed, that one could hardly believe they were made by the dripping of water, as we had been told they were; we came to the conclusion, that Nature had formed them first, and that man at some time had aided the work.

In our dining-room, there was a crystal table in the centre, and at either end what appeared to have been once big arm-chairs, but they had rather lost their shape; on each side were crystal lounges, they were almost intact, so we required no other furniture; from the roof hung a sort of pendant, which we converted into a chandelier by placing plenty of candles on it, their twinkling light causing the crystal to sparkle as if set with jewels, the reflections flashing from point to point made it, verily, a fairy palace.

We had a grand dinner, and agreed that we had never dined in such a palace of beauty before.

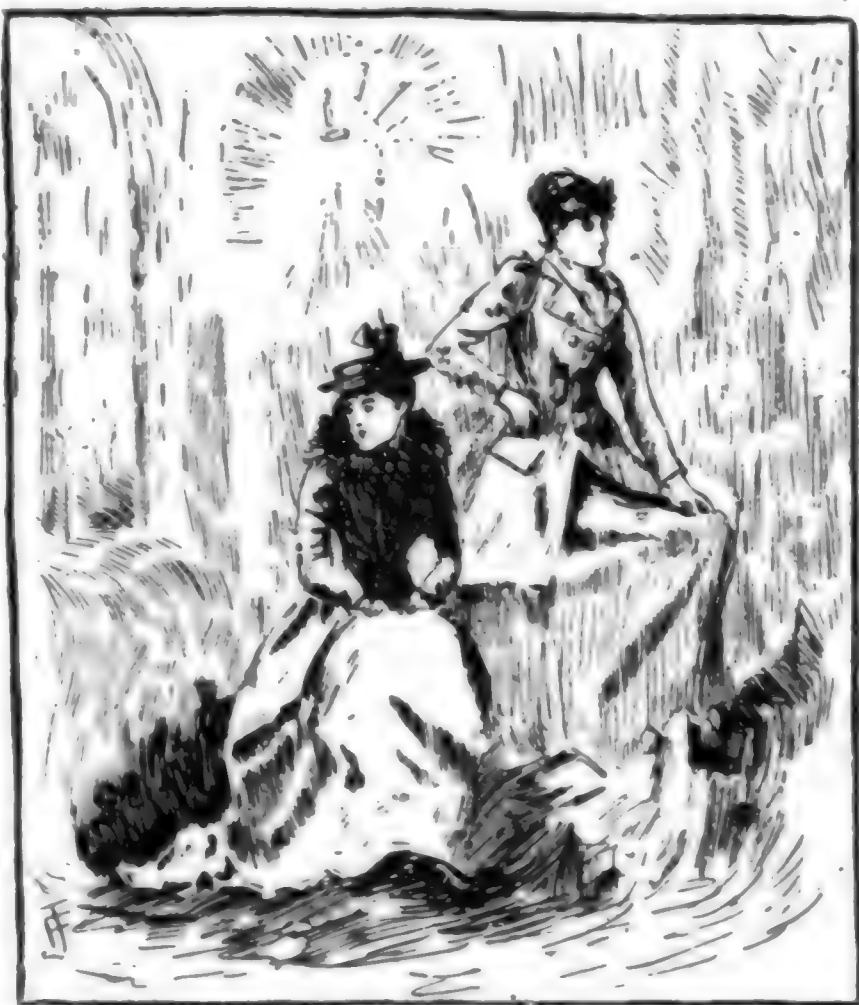
After the feast, Ada determined to sketch the large cave, and I, who was her devoted slave, took the opportunity of remaining with her. Mr. and Mrs. Richards rested on the divans which Randall had thought-

fully upholstered with blankets and pillows.

The boys, as all native servants are called, looked very picturesque as they cleared away the things, for we had them dressed in white garments, with bright coloured scarves round their heads and waists.

Mabel decided to go with the others, on a voyage of exploration, much to her mother's anxiety, for she said she only felt comfortable while we were all under her eye; she desired that they should fasten themselves together by a rope, so, to comfort her, they tied themselves in couples, and left us, laughingly declaring they were

going to find the gold, Gnattusia had told us about. We heard their voices long after they had disappeared from view, and now and then we fancied we heard a faint rumbling sound, as of underground thunder; it caused a weird feeling to creep over us, for, as I mentioned before, the cave was so vast that one could only partly see into its deep shades. Here and there, were exquisite groups of figures, foliage, and strange-looking animals, all in



THE CRYSTAL CAVES.

crystal; no one who has not visited such caves can possibly imagine their loveliness. I had heard travelers' tales of them, but the reality was beyond my most vivid imagination; some of the draperies seemed as of the finest lace; it was so delicate and beautiful, that we fancied it must have been the real thing at one time, and, as the ages had rolled on, become petrified. On close examination we found passages from most of the recesses, leading in all directions, so that this must have been the central hall; the passages were narrow, and of course dark; we did not feel inclined to venture down them, so settled down to take a general outline of the cave.

Ada's sketch was getting on famously.

She had been working at it for over an hour, when we were astonished on looking up to see the others had returned, all looking more or less scared. They did not tell us much about what they had seen, Mabel declaring, "She had had enough of underground palaces, and wanted to return to the camp, and again feel the warmth of the sun, for that she felt chilled to her bones."

Mrs. Richards thought we all required a cup of tea, before we undertook the climb out. Ada and I would willingly have continued our work; but Mabel would hear of no delay, so we made up our minds to return on the morrow and finish.

During tea, Mabel became more confidential, and told us they had seen an underground river, and it was that which we heard rumbling away in the distance; and then she declared that even through the roar of the water, as it splashed and dashed over the rocks, they had heard some unearthly groans—in fact, they fancied they heard some one call, but as they could discover nothing, Mabel became frightened and begged them all to return, which they did. Just as she arrived at this point of her narrative, we

were all startled by seeing a set look of fright on her face, and then she gave us all a turn by calling out, "Look, look at those dreadful eyes!" We all turned at once in the direction indicated, but could see nothing; and though we rushed into the big cave without a moment's delay, nothing uncanny was visible.

The ladies were getting more and more nervous, so we decided to pack up and depart, but the getting out took us much longer than we expected; the moon was brightly shining by the time we reached our waggon, and as we were all tired, we turned in.

CHAPTER II. BURIED ALIVE.

Next morning another shooting expedition was arranged, as Randall and the two boys wanted to take some biltong—or

dried buck meat—back with them.

Ada and I decided to return to the caves and finish the sketch, so, taking some luncheon and our sketching materials with us, we started off. After working steadily for some little time, Ada disturbed the silence by saying, "Don't you want to see the underground river? because I do."



I SAW IT WAS GNATTUSIA.

I told her I was most anxious to see it, but feared to propose doing so, lest, after Mabel's fright, she would not care to venture.

We had luncheon and started at once, as we had no intention of remaining late.

We remembered Mrs. Richards' advice of the day before, and fastened ourselves together by a rope, and, each provided with a lantern, we started. Guiding ourselves by the sound of the water, we were not long in discovering the river; we had some stiff climbing to accomplish before we arrived at a path on its bank that, strangely enough, looked as if it were constantly used, instead of the unfrequented way we thought it must be.

At the spot where we first sighted the river, it was foaming and thundering down into what appeared a bottomless abyss; for we could not hear the water reach the end of its fall, and there the river passed out of our view.

On the opposite side, there appeared to be a soft light, as though coming down through a crevice from some overhead opening, and the path there appeared much easier than on our side.

I did not like to suggest crossing, as there were one or two nasty-looking jumps to be made from rock to rock across the dark pit, and there were no other means of getting over, for it was blocked where the river went down by a wall of solid crystal.

As we stood thus, gazing at the roaring stream, Ada asked if I did not hear something besides the splash of the water, and on intently listening, we fancied we could distinguish groans, as from some human being in mortal agony, coming from the other side of the river. We saw no means of crossing at this point, so we decided to return, and cross lower down; but when Ada looked at the leaps she would have to make, her nerve forsook her, and she decided to wait while I crossed alone, and, as it was not very dark, I did not mind leaving her, thinking I should only be gone a few minutes.

I sprang from rock to rock easily enough for the first half of the way, but the last jump was a stiff one. And now I was sure I heard groans quite close, and on rounding an angle, I was astonished to hear the familiar name of "Boss Jack," for so the natives always called me; but I could see no one until, on hearing the call repeated, as if whispered from above, I looked up and there saw a horrible sight.

There was a man fastened by thongs of hide, or riems, as the natives term them, tied tightly to iron hooks driven into the solid rock; his toes just touched a projecting boulder, the foot of which was stained with the blood that had flowed from his wrists and ankles. On lighting my lantern, I saw it was Gnattusia, but so altered. His face had gone almost grey white; his eyes were starting out of his head, while his tongue was so swollen, he could hardly keep it in his mouth. The poor fellow was suffering agonies, and every now and again murmured, "Give me water, boss."

I tried vainly, by jumping, to reach the rock on which his toes rested, and once just tipped it with my fingers, and in doing so, cut them, as if I had struck the blade of a knife; I quickly bound them up with my handkerchief, and then thought of the rope that I had fortunately wound round my waist. I made a noose, and after one or two futile throws, caught the rock, and drew it taut; I then swarmed up the loose end, and so reached the little platform, but it was so small, I could scarcely stand, and dreaded the thought of what would become of us both, if Gnattusia could not remain upright, and it was hardly likely he would be able to do so, when for a certainty we should both fall and roll into the surging river below, and in a moment be carried down into that awful pit of darkness; the very thought made my flesh creep, and, besides, there was poor little Ada to be thought of, and for her sake I knew I must act with great caution.

I fastened the rope securely round his waist, removed his toes from the rock, and carefully cut the riems round his ankles, then I heard the sinews of his arms crack, but he never uttered a sound; in a moment I had him free, and then let him down by the rope. He was so overcome by weakness and pain that his weight was that of a dead man, and it was with the greatest difficulty I kept myself from falling on him, and had I not had the hooks to hold to I must have done so; as it was, I fear I let him down very roughly. When I took hold of the rope to swarm down, it gave way, having been cut by the rocks. Clutching as I fell, I managed to grasp poor Gnattusia's gory foot; he saw my danger, and held on to the rough ground; this saved me, and, with one hand on the bank, I pulled myself up. I was not much

hurt, and turned to Gnattusia, who required all my attention, if his life was to be saved. None but a Kaffir could have lived so long; but they are wonderfully tenacious of life, and have great strength of endurance.

I had my brandy flask, and giving him a few drops, rubbed his joints with a little; then, telling him I must leave him for a while, if he could not walk, while I went to tell Miss Richards the reason of my long delay, he desired me to hasten at once and fetch her, but was too weak to say more. So I rushed away, wondering why he was so anxious for me to go; had he seen or heard anything that I had not? My blood began to surge up in my veins with anxiety, and my dismay was increased tenfold, when, on reaching the spot where I had parted from Ada, I discovered no traces of her, even her lantern was gone; mine I had left behind. Thinking she had perhaps become tired of waiting, and had returned to the large cave, I groped my way back towards it; the light became darker and darker as I crawled back; suddenly I felt a pull at my coat; thinking it had caught on a rock, I put my hand down to release it, and touched a human head. I turned hot and cold all over, for it was so dark I could see nothing; but, to my intense relief, I heard Ada whisper "Jack," and then, drawing me away into a recess, she told me why she had left.



FROM THAT MOMENT WE WERE BOUND TO EACH OTHER.



She had intended returning to the large cave, and was just about relighting her lantern, when she observed some horrible-looking little people advancing; she hid in the recess we were then in, until they had passed, and then followed them, keeping at some distance, and seeing them busy filling up the entrance to the caves, was returning, hoping to be in time to warn me to keep quiet.

I told her I had found Gnattusia, but not how, thinking that all too soon we might share the same fate. The very thought of it made my hair stand on end, but I knew the reality would be far worse, and for the first time my heart failed me at the thought of falling into their hands, if we were discovered; it was quite impossible for our friends to obtain an entrance, while the bushmen were filling it up from the inside. The next moment I was ashamed of myself, for there was brave little Ada holding me by the hand, and plodding on so quietly by my side, without a word of complaint, as if she was the leader; often she fell, and must have hurt herself badly. For the first time my love and admiration overcame me, and taking her dear little face in my hands, I kissed her on the lips. She returned my caress, putting her arms round my neck, but neither of us said a word, though we

both understood from that moment we were bound to each other for all time.

At last we reached the river, and without a word Ada left me, and set off to jump as she had seen me do some time before. I remained watching, fearing the result of that final leap, knowing that I could render her no assistance. I saw her hesitate, then, looking back, she waved her hand to me, though I could hardly see her, for the light was very dim. I turned my face away, fearing she would jump short.

When I looked again she was gone, and then with a beating heart I bounded across, and in my haste overleaped myself and fell on my knees, with my head against something soft; it was Ada, whose courage had broken down after she had accomplished the dreaded feat.

I soothed her as well as I could, and she soon recovered herself. There was no time for delay; I hurried her on to the place where I had left Gnattusia, and found him feeling slightly better. When he heard what had happened, he did not seem in the least astonished, but said, "I knew they meant to do it." He then showed us the bushmen's storehouse of gold. They

had tied him up in that fiendish way, in sight of the cave, intending that he should slowly die, gazing upon the precious metal. Before they fastened him up they cut away a skeleton, which he believed was the remains of his old boss.

As it was now night, we crept into a dark hollow by the side of the river, hoping

they would not seek us there; we could feel all sorts of horrid, creeping things crawling about us, but we dared not strike a light, as we knew the bushmen were about, and Gnattusia felt too ill to continue the journey that, he said, we should have to take to find another opening, so we decided to keep quiet and remain until morning, when we hoped the bushmen would be sleeping. On my asking Gnattusia how he came to be where I had found



LOOKING LIKE MONKEYS RATHER THAN HUMAN BEINGS.

him, he said he had discovered the place from whence the bushmen obtained their gold, some little distance from the caves, and that while he was watching them at work, he must have been overcome by fatigue, and fallen asleep. When he awoke, it was to find himself gagged and bound; he was then let down from above by riems, and that the bushmen on rope

ladders had fastened him up, and there he had remained without food or water two days and nights. He told us he had seen Mabel and the others the day before, but dared not do more than groan, as he feared the bushmen would hear him, and set on them.

Gnattusia did not think they knew we were in the caves, but that they were blocking up the entrance to prevent them being entered again by any of our party. As we sat talking, the pangs of hunger began to be felt by us all, and then I remembered I still had the remains from our luncheon in my satchel. I divided the bread and meat, which was all smashed up together, and having each taken a little brandy, we covered our faces to keep off the cold, loathsome, creeping animals, and must have slept.

CHAPTER III.

HUNTED BY BUSHMEN AND ATTACKED BY CROCODILES.

The taste of food must have brought Gnattusia into a state of hungry madness, for he left us, and crept to the place where the bushmen lived, and having found an iron pot full of boiled beans, had there remained eating, until recalled to his senses by hearing advancing footsteps. Then he rushed back and awoke us,

saying we must follow him at once, which we instantly did. Keeping hold of the rope, we sped on as quickly as we could. The darkness was intense, and the road seemed to be going down to the very bowels of the earth. Then it sloped upwards again, and all the time we could



THEY WERE CROCODILES.

hear the bushmen following, and, what was worse, the steps were gaining on us rapidly. At last the excitement that enabled Gnattusia to have led us so far gave way, for he turned and sank into the mud bank of a large stone tank; we had nothing to do but follow him. It was lighter here, and we could see a narrow arch or bridge crossing over the tank. The bushmen passed very shortly afterwards, looking like monkeys rather than human beings, creeping over the bridge on all-fours. I saw poor Ada shudder when she saw them, as well she might, for they certainly looked like imps of darkness.

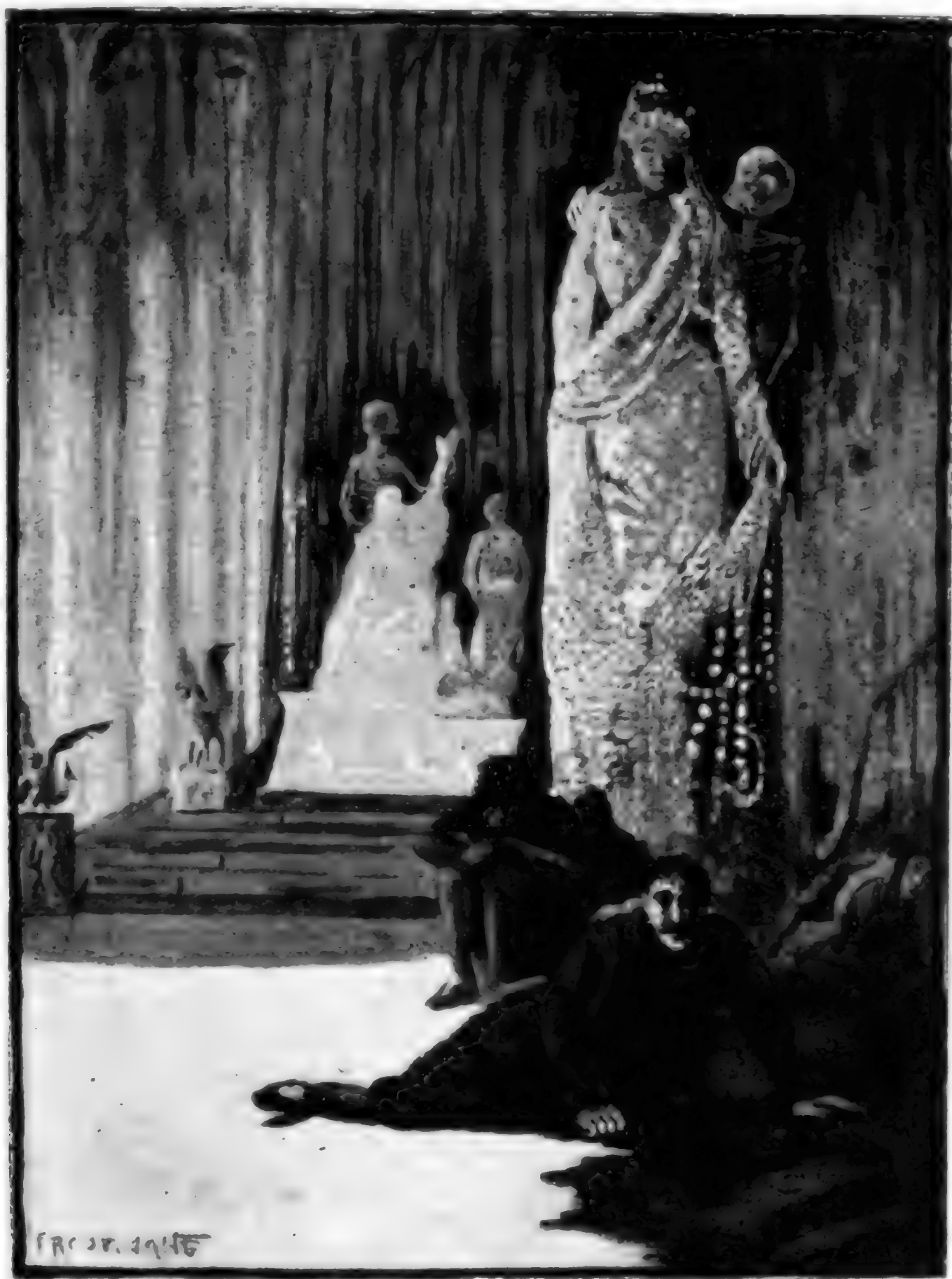
After a few minutes we rose, intending to retrace our steps, but, to our intense horror, saw dozens of glaring eyes fixed upon us. Each minute they increased. We backed and backed, but the further we drew away, the nearer they came. They were crocodiles. One seemed bolder than the rest, and was just about to snap off Gnattusia's head—for he was panic stricken—when I seized and dragged him almost out of the monster's jaws. I tore the handkerchief off my fingers, and threw it to the monster. It was snapped up, but the delay gave us time to scramble



through an opening at the end of the tank, and we then found ourselves on a flight of steps. Following them up for a long distance, we came to a door. As we pushed it, it fell in, being quite rotten; and stepping through, we entered what appeared to have been an ancient temple.

too exhausted to struggle on further. How Ada and Gnattusia had kept up as long as they had was wonderful. I hoped we were safe for a short time at least, and begged them to try and sleep while I watched.

Just above us—for we had hidden in a



JUST ABOVE US WAS A GODDESS.

It was a very dream of beauty, all of pure white crystal; light came in from the roof, which was supported by spiral crystal columns; the altar was also pure white, studded with precious stones; the steps leading up to it were green marble.

We were in no mood to examine or admire the beauties around us, and felt

small alcove—was a goddess, and by the dim light I saw she was covered with beautiful jewellery. I took off one of her bracelets; it was a large, dull sort of green stone, surrounded by beautiful diamonds set in gold. I put it on Ada's arm, scarcely thinking what I was doing, for I might have taken something far more beautiful.



For some two or three hours I sat watching and listening, and just as I was beginning to hope we had escaped our foes, I was horrified to hear footsteps approaching. So the bushmen must have followed us after all, and soon they would be upon us.

I awoke Ada and Gnattusia, and told them to prepare for the worst, as the bushmen were near. Ada pleaded that I would not let her fall alive into their hands, and knowing I could not save her, I promised she should not if I could help it. The poor girl put her arms round my neck, saying, "Dear Jack, if you live to get out of this, you will sometimes remember me, and think that I tried my best to be brave, but it has been too much for me, and I shall be glad to die rather than fall into their hands; for I could not stand now, even if I had the chance of escape, so kill me quickly and flee from here." I took her in my arms, and kissed her. I must draw a veil over those last moments, for I seem to see that heart-rending scene even now as I write.

Hearing the footsteps getting closer, I rose and gave my knife to Gnattusia, and told him, when I gave the signal he was to plunge it into Ada's heart, for I could not bring myself to do the deed, though I

well knew it was more merciful than letting her fall into the hands of villainous bushmen.

I gave my loved one a last farewell kiss. The steps now sounded quite close—in a moment more they would be upon us—and a dark form appeared in the doorway. Turning away, I ordered Gnattusia to do his deadly work. I saw the flash of the blade, and heard my darling give a dying gasp, and then I fell senseless to the ground.

CHAPTER IV.

SAVED FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH.

Oh, horror! I was fastened to the wall, from whence I had so lately released Gnattusia. But no, I must have fallen, for in front of me was a monster crocodile, and as I sprang aside, to avoid his huge jaws, I struck my arm against something hard. I opened my eyes, and to my astonishment and infinite delight, I was in the waggon; and so it had all been a dreadful dream. It must be Christmas morning, for I could hear them singing, and thinking I was late, I tried to spring out of bed, but found I could hardly stand. On looking out to call someone to help me, I saw them all gathered round a newly dug grave, and then a flood of

recollection filled my brain, and I knew it was no dream. Ada was dead and buried, and I lived on; I, who had ordered her death, and now I should see her no more on earth, I forgot to wonder how I came to be in the waggon; my overwhelming grief was too much for me, and I fainted.

When next I opened my eyes, it was midnight. I saw Randall and Hilton asleep. I was feeling better, but could not remain in the waggon; so, wrapping a blanket about me, I crawled out to my dear one's grave.

After that I remember nothing distinctly. It seemed to me I had been dwelling in the spirit world for some time past, where I had both seen and been with Ada, but now I had left her, and returned to my miserable aching body. On looking about, I saw I was in an old-fashioned bed, standing in a large, cool, comfortably furnished room, with windows opening on to a wide stoop. Presently I distinguished well known voices talking outside. I heard Mrs. Richards say, "My dear, the doctor said he would take a turn for the better or worse to-day, so we must be patient."

I tried to call, but found I had no voice; neither could I move. Presently Mrs. Richards came in, and seeing my eyes open, gave me a deliciously cool drink, and then went outside, saying a few words so low I could not catch them. Then, to my astonishment, I saw, as I thought, the spirit of my love advancing; but no, it could not be a spirit, for I felt a kiss from warm living lips, and kneeling down by my side she took my hand in hers, and I felt tears falling every time she kissed it. I fell into a sweet refreshing sleep. I was too weak to wonder long about anything, or how she came to be there at all. As I grew stronger, I learned that when the others came back from their shooting expedition, and hearing we had not returned, they went at once to seek for us, but found, as they thought, that the entrance to the caves had fallen in, and as it was then late, they could do nothing before morning.

At the dawn of day they were up seeking for some other opening, as from the

light they remembered to have seen by the river, they knew there must be an entrance somewhere above that part of the cave. All day they searched about to discover any entrance, and were returning to the camp worn-out and disheartened, when Mr. Richards stumbled and fell, and on going to help him, they found he had disappeared into what they fancied was a large ant-bear hole. One after the other they crept in, to find themselves on a flight of steps, much broken and worn; still, they were unmistakeably steps. Going down some distance, they came to a door, which, greatly to their relief, gave way with very little pressure, admitting them into the Crystal Temple. Hearing a cry, they saw me fall to the ground, and rushing to the spot, they found Ada, as they feared, dead. Gnattusia, however, had been too weak to be very careful in his aim, and so had just missed giving her a mortal stab, and under Mrs. Richards' skilful nursing she had long since quite recovered.

It was poor Gnattusia I saw buried when I was half delirious, and they found me lying insensible on his grave.

Ada and I are long since married, and although the events just narrated have lost some of their vividness by the healing hand of time, still even now, the scenes we passed through come before me with fearful distinctness, and force me to remember those awful hours when I had to order the death of my new-found love.

Ada still has the strange bracelet I put on her arm in the Crystal Cave. One of our boys was playing with it the other day, and dropped it. The fall caused a spring at the back to open, and there we found a most exquisitely drawn little map of Northern and Central Africa, showing the roads from the coast through forests and rivers, leading to the towns and mines of ancient days. I wanted to send it to the Chartered South African Company, but Ada decreed otherwise, saying: "Jack discovered it, so he has the best right to it, and it may prove useful to him or our boys some day."

Whispers from the Woman's World.

BY FLORENCE MARY GARDINER.



The Woman's World was the mocking title given by the Romans in the latter days of the Republic to "the toilette," in derision of those who showed an extravagant fondness for sumptuous apparel and costly ornament.

These words now, however, bear a very different signification, and apply to many subjects outside the province of dress; and it is in the broader sense that they have been chosen as the title for papers specially devoted to all that concerns the fair sex.

Though in these advanced times it is distinctly a woman's duty to take an intelligent interest in various questions of the day, social, political, and domestic, this need not prevent her devoting some of her attention to the best means of making herself attractive to those with whom she comes in contact; and if she is wise, whatever her temptation to do so may be, she will never neglect the outward adorning of the body, notwithstanding the chaste advice of St. Peter; for, by the aid of careful

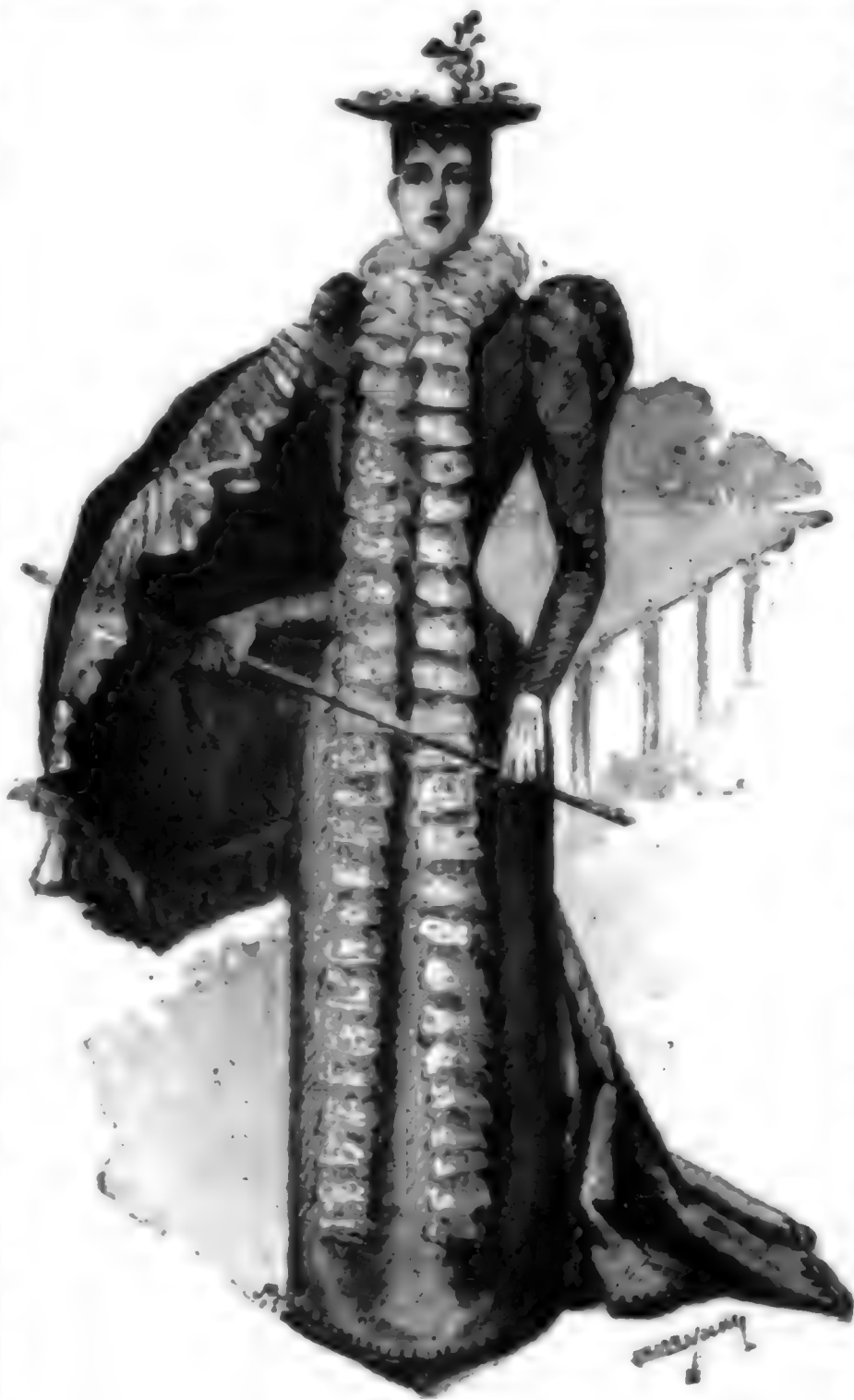
dress, and a well-chosen costume, an unattractive woman may disguise her weak points, and accentuate those which are less

objectionable, till, at a moderate distance, her own husband will hardly recognise her. Take, for example, one who is "not beautiful, but massive." How is it she invariably wears tight-fitting bodices, and other garments outlining the form distinctly, when a drapery falling in long folds in front, attached to the bodice, and covering the hips with an amplitude of folds, would do much towards disguising her ungainly figure?

For the same reason stout people should refrain from light fabrics of large design, and choose dark tones, which diminish the apparent size; wearing black velvet as often as possible, as this is the material *par excellence* for giving the much

desired effect of slimness.

But there is another aspect of the question. The colour of a gown, or the set of her bonnet, will generally disclose more of the wearer's mind than is dreamed



A NEW LACE BOA.

of in her philosophy; and the great majority of Englishwomen (that grand army of brave, beauty-loving wives, daughters, and sisters, who count among their duties the delightful task of making the world brighter to themselves and all around them) wish, if they only knew how, to put their best front to the world.

During the present season, rich satins and brocades have been very fashionable, and a strong impetus has been given to the British silk industries by the numerous exhibitions which have been held by leading firms, anxious to secure to our wage-earning population a large proportion of the enormous sums annually sent abroad, France alone exporting last year to the value of £15,000,000.

The British Silk Association, under the Presidency of Princess Mary of Teck, numbers many enthusiastic supporters, and has done much in aiding the production of homemade silks. Some of the new dress fabrics are literal copies of materials worn and rejoiced in by our grandmothers; and many an old oak chest or bridal coffer has been ransacked, to provide designs for the Spitalfields and Yorkshire weavers.

There is also a great demand for everything which is shot; and this method of manufacture has been applied to gauzes, surahs and bengalines, which make particularly effective and charming gowns at a comparatively small cost. A vast amount of ingenuity has been expended on the invention of various pretty accessories, to give additional attractiveness to the toilette. Among others may be specially mentioned dainty satin handbags, covered with natural flowers, which are useful for carrying an opera glass, fan, or other trifles indispensable to a woman's comfort. Long ostrich feather boas, of every shade, and others made of

flowers, are still much used for evening dress, while for morning wear those composed of lace are generally preferred. In fact, lace has quite superseded chiffon, and appears upon materials of every description, either in the form of draperies, as a yoke over a colour, or, more often still, as a frilled shoulder cape, or deep pelerine.

Black Chantilly looks particularly well on silk, while fine *écru point de Venise* is used indiscriminately on cloth or silken gowns.

Tea gowns this summer are simply irresistible, and can anything be more delightful than to slip off one's walking dress, after a long day's shopping, and to envelop oneself in the easeful folds of this delightful garment, which always stirs up a feeling of profound gratitude that I was not born in the good old days, when steel and whalebone ruled supreme. An eminently cosy tea gown may be made of one of the pretty shot silks already referred to; the full front of lace, gauged at intervals; the back, *à la Watteau*; and sleeves in large puffs, with lace ruffles. A more stylish gown is composed of Liberty's Chrysanthemum Brocade, with duck egg green ground, the flowers in two tones of green, and foliage in apricot shades. Made *en princesse*, with long pendant sleeves of silk, and undersleeves and full front of Ranee gauze, a soft and dainty shot fabric ethereal as a spider's web; it is indeed a dream of beauty.

Fashions for children seem to grow year by year more picturesque; and at the same time more sensible and becoming.

The sketch given is a reproduction of a classical Greek costume in soft silk or cashmere, sparingly trimmed with passementerie.

But, as I briefly hinted at the commencement of this article, there are other subjects besides dress in the Woman's



GIRL'S DRESS FROM LIBERTY'S.



A COSY CORNER.

World which are equally worthy of discussion; and one cannot pass over, without comment, the valiant efforts which have recently been made, in both camps, for securing greater political advantages for the weaker sex. Most of us fight rather shy of the term "Women's Suffrage," feeling that it savours of

of women and girls, as in factories, schools, workhouses, etc., members of their own sex (who presumably know more about their requirements than men) should be appointed to inspect the same. Also that those who have studied medicine should be eligible for election in the maternity wards of workhouses, and in the female

mat-
ters
with
which
our
male
belong-
ings tell
us we better
have nothing
to do. So the
majority go
on, from year
to year, in a
state of dense
ignorance of
the history of
our country, our
laws, and our re-
lations with other
nations of the world.

That very injudi-
cious section of the
community, in deri-
sion called the
"Screaming Sister-
hood," have also
done much to scare
away the quieter
women from what
so deeply concerns
them. It must, how-
ever, be apparent to
the most womanly
mind, that the ad-
ministration of cer-
tain laws affecting
women and children
should be amended,
and that they should
receive, with the
smallest possible de-
lay, the earnest at-
tention of those in
authority. Though
I do not personally
pant to rush into
the political arena,
I do think that
where there are
large communities

departments of State Lunatic Asylums; and certain alterations, I think, might be made in the laws relating to marriage, divorce, and in the hours of labour for women and children.

Towards the close of the London season, one is greeted on all sides with the enquiry, "When do you leave town?" and to those who can follow their own free will in this particular, my suggestion will not apply. But hundreds are compelled, by professional and other engagements, to delay their departure indefinitely; and the working bees in this cosmopolitan hive should recruit exhausted nature from time to time, by coach drives through some of the delightful country to be found within fifty miles of London. Even the most indefatigable can spare a few hours at short intervals, and will return refreshed, and with renewed strength, for the daily round and common task, which forms such a considerable part of the average woman's existence.

To Dorking is one of the prettiest drives in the kingdom; passing through the best parts of town and country, till you finally draw up at the Burford Bridge Hotel, near Boxhill.

To Guildford is an equally enjoyable route, and to those who are unacquainted with this quaint and picturesque old country town, I can confidently recommend it.

For those who are wearying for a breath of "the briny," the Brighton Coach will offer special attractions.

The Wonder accomplishes the double journey to St. Albans in about six hours, and the Old Times takes a few minutes more for the drive to Virginia Water.

But I would advise anyone seriously

contemplating this very mild form of dissipation, to invest in "Coach Drives from London," by Benedick, of *The Sportsman*, as it gives full particulars of the various routes, times of starting, fares, etc.

There is a very pleasant ring about the word "home," and it has been my agreeable task, during the last few weeks, to feather a nest for my own occupation, in this "mighty metropolis." But while arranging my household gods, it often occurred to me how we women value trifles "light as air," owing to the memories they recall. Who, for instance, would exchange for ten times the value, the portrait of one whose gentle eyes look tenderly upon us, and whose presence was our delight in days of yore; or a soft and downy chair, that accommodates itself to every angle of our body, and was "the silent, but most comfortable, friend" through the long and weary hours of convalescence?

Again, one's eyes rest upon the simple gift of a friend who has gone to that bourne from whence no traveller returns. These are the things which really form a woman's home, and not costly furniture, expensive pictures, or the various handsome and massive items which make such an imposing appearance in an auctioneer's catalogue. I have, however, introduced a sketch of one of my new possessions, a Cosy Corner, for which I am indebted to Messrs. Godfrey Giles & Co., of 19, Old Cavendish Street. Unlike many of these erections, it is exactly what its name implies—a comfortable and delightful nook, wherein one can enjoy the latest novel, a friendly chat with a kindred spirit, or prove the truth of the old adage—"East or West, Home is best."





CHAPTER III.

HIS GRACE, full of the direst wrath and the most unutterable disgust, had just requested us to leave, that he might have privacy to reflect, when a startling rat-tat-tat sounded upon the door. It was so loud, so imperative, so clearly expressive of authority and the presence of an august personage, that we thought no meaner citizen of the Republic than the President himself could stand without.

"Be good enough to open the door," said the Duke, composing his ruffled looks to greet the illustrious visitor. "You have seen the President's photograph, have you not?"

"I have, your Grace."

"Then you will know if it is he."

I opened the door, and a gentleman whose photograph I had never seen grinned in my face.

"How do, kernil?" he said cordially. "Ripping weather, ain't it?" and he slouched in past me with the nonchalance—the easy familiarity of a bosom crony of fifty years' standing. He was rolling the stub of a cigar between a set of black and tan teeth, and his hat was dizzily perched

on the back of his hand. He did not remove it on entering. The Duke adjusted his eye-glass, and fixed a ducal stare of enquiry and rebuke upon the intruder. But he bore it without flinching.

"Glad to find you all together," he went on, urbanely throwing himself into the easiest chair in the room; "and you aren't engaged, are you? My luck will put some I know into fits," and he chuckled quietly. "Not intruding, am I?" he asked, then looking at me with a beaming countenance.

"Ah—well—no, to be sure not. Glad to see you, I'm sure," I answered weakly, not daring to look at the Duke.

"Thank you. Thought you would," said the stranger agreeably. "There's a real live dook here, ain't there? My word! 'tain't every day we can look in on one here. Some people say European aristocrats are no great shucks. But I like to judge for myself. Which is the Dook?"

"This is his Grace of Dunnington," I replied, deferentially indicating Smith.

"How do, Dook?" said the stranger genially, giving his cigar stub a twist. Then he rose and walked round Smith,

eyeing him critically. "Built pretty much on the plan of common folks after all," he commented, reseating himself. "But I reckon nature used the same mould for the lot of us; we are all cast in the image of that rare old boodler, the first caretaker of Eden. He couldn't keep his hands off what didn't belong to him, and we're liquidating his debts yet. Well, Dook, our *bong tong* will be mighty curious about you; I'll let 'em have it hot, you bet. We have our aristocracy as well as England. Yes, sir, of the most genoo-wine sort; prick them, and blame me if the blood don't come out as blue as boarding-house milk. Yes, sir; there are four hundred of 'em, all located in Noo York. I'll make 'em serenade you in a body, you bet I will. But what's the noos? How do you like the United States? Great country, ain't it?"

"Seems to be," said Brown, with a glance of enquiry at the Duke.

His Grace levelled his eyeglass again in his most damaging manner; but the stranger shrank not.

"Quite an English institootion, the eyeglass," he remarked affably.

"Mind letting me try it?" and before the astounded Duke could protest, the visitor had taken his eyeglass, and was screwing it into his right optic before the mirror with indescribable grimaces and contortions. "Feels kind of funny to have a window-pane stuck in your eye," he remarked presently, surveying the company with unabashed complacency. "Can't say I'd care for it, though custom is everything. There it is, Dook," handing it back. "If I decide on getting my photo taken in the

English style while you're in the city, may be you'll loan it."

Then, taking his chair again and turning to Brown, he went on as if there had been no interruption. "Yes sir, the United States is the greatest nation in existence to-day; more money, more brains, more resources, more grit, more enterprise, bigger establishments, bigger trade, bigger mountains, bigger lakes, bigger plains, bigger waterfalls, bigger everything than

any other country on this side of the Noo Jerusalem. We deal in the big things of creation—none of your one-hoss affairs for us—no, siree. Shakespeare speaks about a mighty nation lighting its cigar at the full blaze of the mid-day sun without blinking; that's us. Right smart man, Shakespeare, though he never knew much about America. He'd have done well if King George hadn't spiled him; for he had a notion of humour. By the way, can you explain how it comes that the Britishers of to-day are so dull?"

Another knock came to the door, and I thought we should get rid of this amiable lunatic. I stepped forward

to see who was without, but anticipating me, he sprang to his feet, popped out his head, called "Engaged," and shut the door with a bang.

"I beg your pardon, it may be our luggage," I said.

"No it ain't," he answered quickly. "It's a rival paper. Here's my card, I had forgotten." His card explained the mystery; he was an interviewer.

"I reckon we'll have to hump ourselves," he went on rapidly. "Didn't think they'd



I OPENED THE DOOR.

get on your tracks so quick. But I've got the bulge on some, I know, knocking spots out of 'em, so to speak." While he spoke he was turning over the leaves of a tattered note-book. "Now," smoothing it out on his knee, "I guess I'm ready." And before we could act in self-defence, he was pouring a broadside of questions upon us. Up to that moment I had but a vague idea what "inquisitive" meant; since then I have had a very vivid idea.

Joseph E. Worcester defines it as "busy in making enquiry; curious; prying; scrutinizing; busy in search of information." And I suppose that is as far as a lexicographer could be expected to go. But he doesn't so much as touch the heart of the matter. Inquisitive means a great deal more than poor old Worcester in his innocence ever imagined. Probably interviewing hadn't been invented in his day; he had never been cross-examined by a reporter about the compilation of his own dictionary. If he had been, his eyes would have been opened, and very likely he would have revised the work, and given a clearer and fuller definition of "inquisitive," with illustrative examples.

To me that reporter revealed a new phase, a fresh development of human nature.

Until I met him, I had no notion that it was in man to be so agreeably and unblushingly impertinent. Without any apology, without the least sign of trepidation, or hesitation, he probed into the most secret recesses of our being, the darkest passages of our lives. He wanted to know all about our parents, our grandparents, our great grandparents, and down, or up, the line to our remotest ancestors. He seemed to have some

doubt whether we were really descended from Adam. Turning from our ancestry, he enquired into the moral character, the financial standing, and the love affairs of our brothers and sisters, and aunts, and cousins, and friends and acquaintances. Then he swooped back upon ourselves. What were our ages? Were we married and if so, how many wives had we for the lot? Had we ever been in jail, or in a lunatic asylum, or in Parliament? Did

we believe in vaccination, especially when the lymph wasn't obtained direct from an ox, but from a diseased old horse? Were we prepared to state whether or not it was a fact that the bottom was falling out of the British nation? What did we think of the Republican form of Government, as far as we had seen it? Did we share the popular opinion regarding mothers-in-law? Had any of us left weeping creditors behind? How did we account for the huge splay-feet of the English ladies of the upper classes? Was it not a disgrace that there should be so much corruption in English public life? How did it come that English statesmen and journalists were all imbecile? Would we have cigars? What was our business in the United States? Were we interested in

pork, or was lard in our line, or did we mean to run a corner in wheat or molasses? What was our candid opinion of Jay Gould? Had we inspected Frankie Cleveland's baby? Who was going to be the next Sultan of Morocco? Was it true that Mr. Gladstone had embraced the Mohammedan faith, and that the Archbishop of Canterbury had turned Methodist? Had Oscar Wilde cut his hair? Were we fond of mince pie? What did



"FEELS KIND OF FUNNY."

we say our business in the States was — gold-mining, cattle-ranching, railroading, land-speculation, oil-boring, or dealing in corner lots? Didn't the American girls lick creation for style? What did we think of the American system of raising millionaires? Would we come down

to the bar and he would put up the drinks? Wasn't British literature in a rotten state? How did we account for the great superiority of American novelists to English? Weren't the American journals the smartest on earth? Were we going to remain for the Exposition?—These are a small sample of the questions we were expected to answer off hand. When he learned that I had had accidents on the passage out, he wished to examine my mouth to appraise the damage for himself, and desired me to strip that he might count my wounds.

I suggested that that would be giving him too much trouble; but he replied effusively:

"Not at all. It's my business to get facts. Count nothing trouble when I can get facts."

"And how do you manage when there doesn't happen to be any facts?" I ventured to ask.

"Manage? Why, I make 'em, of course. You don't ketch me short of facts if I can help it; no, siree."

He went at last, and another took his place. To the second succeeded a third; to the third a fourth; to the fourth a fifth; to the fifth a sixth; and so on, until a whole battalion; nay, a whole brigade; nay, the entire Grand Army of the Republic had marched past, so to speak. They all asked the same questions in the same way, they all offered us cigars,



"MANAGE? WHY, I MAKE 'EM, OF COURSE."

and three-fourths of them generously wanted to "put up the drinks."

It was entertaining for a while; but we got tired of repeating the same formulas over and over again, and then we took to lying. The Duke, by virtue of his rank, lied most. Helied in the calmest fashion imaginable,

as if he had been long accustomed to the exercise, though I knew him to have been up to that time a truthful man. I could not have believed there was such a fund of mendacity in him. Brown did nobly also, and I did my best. But even falsehood may grow monotonous. The pangs of hunger, in the language of an elegant writer, began to assault us savagely. Instead of answering the interviewers, there was an almost irresistible impulse to eat them. When we could stand it no longer, and hadn't another lie to tell, we made a concerted rush upon the door, bolted and barricaded it, vowing instant annihilation to anyone who tried to enter. The enemy hung about, evidently with the intention of starving us into capitulation, but at length the siege was raised, and the foe drew off to our unspeakable relief.

But they had their revenge, as we discovered to our cost next morning. The figure we cut in the press was such as still makes my blood curdle to think of. The poor Duke, who got the worst of it from his exalted station, raved for twenty-four hours on the verge of madness, and Brown, who is of a pugnacious disposition, rushed about in search of fire-arms; but, happily, he did not find any.

The interviewers whom we had admitted gave tolerable reports. Not more than nine-tenths of what they wrote was false. But those whom, from the pangs

of hunger and exhaustion, we could not admit, gave at least 2,000 per cent. of falsehood, and of a kind that gave us flushings of fever and shiverings of ague by turns. We fancy in this country that our newspaper men can lie, so they can; I admit it. But they are simply not in it with their American brethren. An American interviewer can squeeze more falsehood into a paragraph than an English journalist can get into a column. The American comes into the world with a distinct aptitude, a genius for fiction, and

he cultivates his gifts with the zeal and assiduity of an artist. He is not hampered by tradition; in moments of inspiration or of spleen, he cares nothing for truth; his aim is effect. And I, who have suffered at his hands, must reluctantly admit that he is a master in his art. His pictures of persons of whom he knows nothing, on whom, often, he has never even set eyes, are full of animation and colour. With him, ignor-

ance is no bar to success; indeed, the deeper his ignorance of his subject, the more entertaining will be his descriptions. Had those columns with the portentous headings been about other people, we should have pronounced them delightful. Being about ourselves, there was no fun in them. To be dressed up elaborately as objects for the contempt and laughter of sixty million people was an experience on which we had not counted, and which, in the expressive native phrase, made us squirm consider-

ably, particularly the Duke, whose sense of dignity was sorely hurt. The only consolation was, that the papers flatly contradicted each other in details, and that the Duke had got in some enormous and telling deceptions in our favour. But for that we should have been driven to suicide.

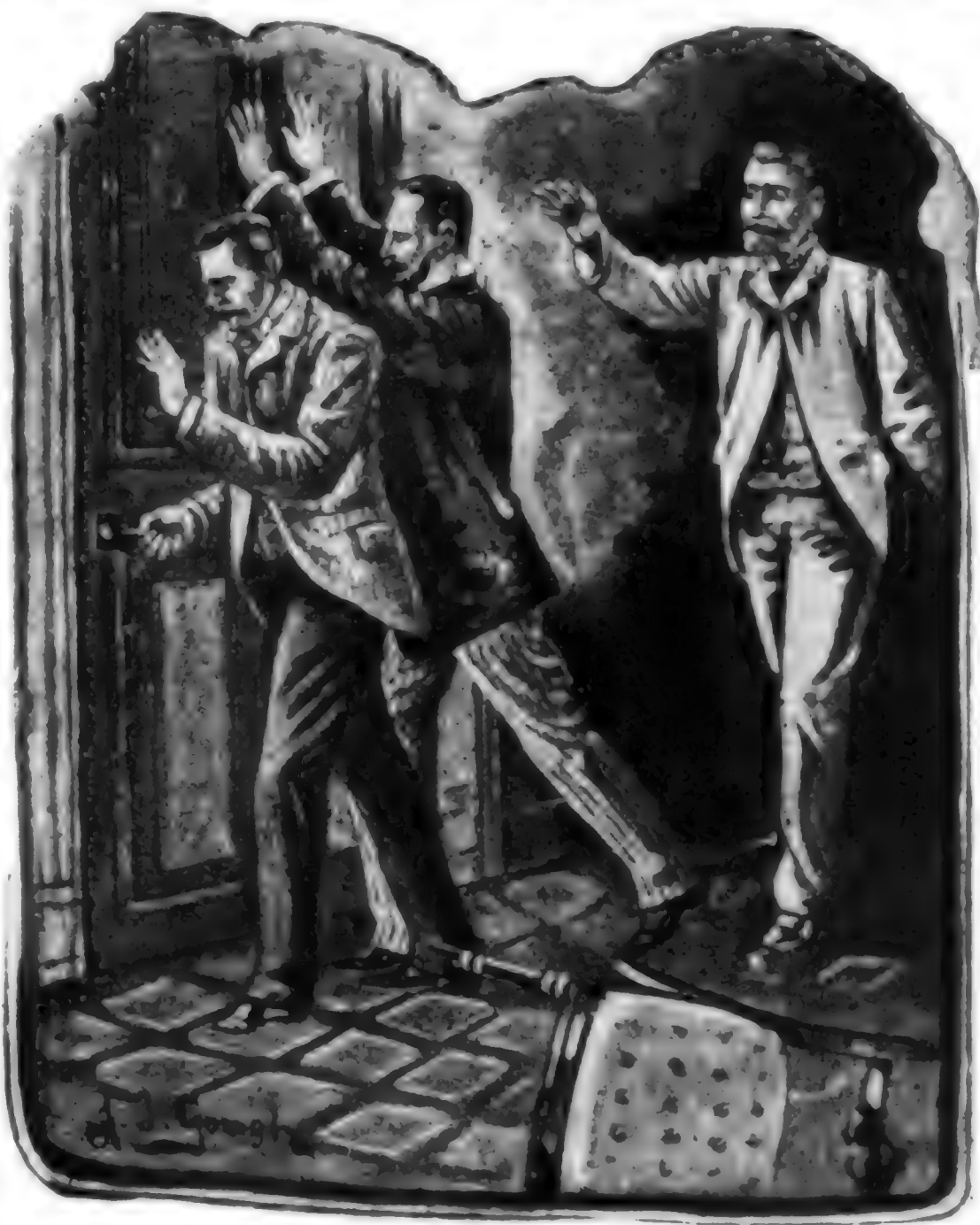
CHAPTER IV.

Having routed the enemy—that is to say, turned a score of balked and offended reporters adrift to hold us up to public ridicule and contempt—we made

an aggressive movement up-on the dining-room. We were famishing and desperate. I have never seen a shark more ravenous than we were after our fearful ordeal in the witness box; but then it is only honest to state that the only shark I ever saw was a stuffed one in a museum, and it wasn't ravenous at all. The head waiter met us at the door, and took us in charge, as if he were the receiving officer of a penitentiary, and

we life-convicts. He did not smile, he did not say he was glad to see us; he gave no sort of greeting whatever, only beckoned us in a disdainful, peremptory way to follow him, as he journeyed to a distant part of the room. We were in no mood for pedestrianism just then, and so, innocently taking the law into our own hands, we sat down at a table half-way. But he made us get up again and continue the march.

"Can't sit there," he said, sharply turning upon us. "This way."



WE RUSHED TO THE DOOR.

He did not seem to be aware that one of our party was a Duke, or, if he knew, he didn't care. I could not help pitying his Grace, so different was this treatment from what he expected his rank to ensure.

In the dining-rooms of American hotels, you must sit where the head waiter puts you. If you attempt to choose a seat for yourself, you will be ejected by half-a-

dozen athletic niggers, with every mark of shame and ignominy. Nor are you permitted to carry on conversation, except by the gracious permission of the supreme autocrat. He will tolerate nothing but absolute and unconditional submissiveness in speech and behaviour. He is not a flunkey, but a ruling potentate—haughty, imperious, tyrannical, invincible. He heeds no suggestion, brooks no opposition, recognises no right but his own, and is completely devoid of feeling. This is strong language; but I know what I am talking about. There is a look

in his eye that would humble an emperor; a loftiness and indifference in his manner that would turn a female post-office clerk green with envy. No man has ever been known to come into conflict with him and score a victory. He is above all consideration for his fellows; he condescends to take wages from the proprietor, but that is the only condescension about him.

Americans know all this, and are silent

and docile in public dining-rooms. The room in which we were was full, but it was still as the grave, save for an occasional clatter of plates and clink of metal, for which not the guests but the waiters were responsible. What the consequence would have been if we had all begun to talk at once, after the European fashion, I shrink from imagining. Probably the

head waiter would not have spared a man of us.

I have remarked that the room was full. The dining-rooms of American hotels are always full, because very few of the citizens of the Republic live at home. They live at hotels and big boarding houses, and on railway trains, and in stores. An Englishman is proud of his hearth; an American has no hearth to be proud of, so he seeks his pleasures and his comforts at somebody else's.

For refection he goes principally to the hotels, which keep an open table all day long and far into the night.

Breakfast begins at six and lasts five hours, dinner at half-past one and lasts three hours, and supper at half-past six and lasts until midnight. No one can complain that there is not an opportunity to eat in America.

Besides the people, there was a great gathering of newspapers in the room. No true American would dream of sitting down to a meal without his newspaper;



THE HEAD WAITER MET US AT THE DOOR.

he would be miserable without it, for *it* is his nature to munch and read simultaneously. His life is so brief, and his business so great, that he cannot afford to do only one thing at a time. This excessive haste makes him rather an unsociable companion at table, and turns his complexion sallow.

I don't think an American would be happy unless he had a sallow complexion, or, in the vernacular, a yaller look in the face. That yaller look is the distinguishing characteristic of his race, and he is proud of it. Dyspepsia is the national and aristocratic complaint in America, being held in the same high esteem there that gout is with us. No high caste American would be without that badge of distinction. To win it, he will eat until he dies; he often does. All things that tend to the glorious consummation which is one of the chief objects of his ambition, he will take in with the indiscriminate and impartial readiness of an ostrich; and he will bolt them. To master the news of the universe for four and twenty hours, and get through a square meal, takes a trained American about fifteen minutes. With so much zeal and energy he could not fail in his object, and he doesn't. As has been shrewdly observed by previous writers, the Americans are a nation of dyspeptics.

An American generally has three square meals a day. Perhaps the English reader doesn't know what a square meal is. I will try to enlighten him. A square meal means fifty or sixty different dishes that are to be consumed at a sitting. Suppose a man wants breakfast, he will begin, let us say, with coffee or chocolate, or green tea, then he will go on to maple syrup and buckwheat cakes, fried potatoes, dipped toast, batter cakes, corn cakes, Johnny cakes, Indian muffins, cream crackers, baked sweet potatoes, omelettes with cheese, cod-fish balls, smoked salmon, olives, young onions, and some other light preliminary etceteras. By this time his appetite is sharpened, and he proceeds joyously to rump steak, tender loin steak, porterhouse steak, veal cutlets, calf's liver, stewed kidney, fried bacon, Jersey sausages, pork chops, and kindred dainties; mixing the lot plenteously with pickles, chow-chow, gherkins, and other piquant relishes calculated to keep the appetite going. Very likely, however, he is now beginning to feel that time is flying, and that he must hurry up, so he makes a dash

at cold tongue, pressed beef, and other articles that can be swallowed whole without scalding. Then he rolls his napkin into a ball, throws it among the empty crockery, and rushes forth to wrestle with the world.

He returns to dinner in breathless haste, and with an air of preoccupation. Taking up the bill of fare, he runs like lightning through the various items, a darkey waiter standing by his side with an impassive and listless countenance. But the sable attendant hears all that is said, and what is more, remembers it. Returning presently with a pyramid of steaming delf poised on his head, he builds ramparts about the eager guest. The latter seizes a spoon and begins the attack without a moment's delay. Starting, perhaps, with turtle or oxtail soup, he hurries on to boiled salmon, broiled white fish and sturgeon steak. Next he will address himself to beef-steak pie, ribs of beef, prairie chicken, mutton chops, goose, turkey, boiled squabs, oyster pie, clipped potatoes, fried potatoes, succotash, baked beans, tomatoes, and buttered corn-on-the-cob. These disposed of, he will go on to mince pie, pumpkin pie, apple pie, plum pie, various puddings, innumerable tarts, manifold jellies, nuts and dried fruits. He winds up with ice cream, which he washes down with hot coffee. By this time he is in the midst of a chaos of yawning crockery, which is strewn about like the ruins of a dismantled fort. He leans back for a second, plying a quill tooth-pick; his labours are at an end for the present. The next instant he is up and flying for the door; he is ready for the afternoon's business. When supper comes, he will have breakfast and dinner rolled into one, and then he feels that he has had his three square meals.

That day we ate strictly on the American principle. Our meals were so exceedingly square that I wrestled the whole succeeding night with a legion of demons. But in the first flush of novelty the sense of luxury was delicious.

"This is princely," said Brown, who is addicted to the pleasures of the table. "They may charge—but, by Jove, they feed you. Our English hotels are not a patch on this."

While we were feasting, the head waiter marched in with a man, whom he placed at a contiguous table facing Brown. The man immediately began to stare so steadily and so keenly, that Brown could

not help saying "What the deuce is that man glowering at?" As if to answer the question, the man rose almost as the words were spoken and came towards us, keeping his eye fixed on Brown. He approached at first as if in doubt or trepidation, but as he drew close, his face suddenly beamed with radiant smiles, and his manner became assured. When he got within a few yards of us he made a spring, seizing the stupified Brown by the right hand, knife and all, and wringing it till the owner nearly swooned with pain.

"I knew I was not mistaken," he cried, in that affecting tone of voice which novelists describe as something between laughing and crying. "My dear, dear, never-forgotten friend, this is a joy indeed; little could I have anticipated this," working Brown's arm with desperate vigour, as if it were a pump handle. "How could I have told that I was going to see you after all these long, long years, and here—here, of all places in the world. But I looked into that face, and I said to myself: It is he, yes, it must be he—no one else could have those features. I know that brow, I remember those eyes, that mouth, that peculiar curve of the lip. They bring back the days of my youth, they revive golden and sacred memories. Oh, the joy of this meeting is too much—too much!" and in an ecstasy of delight he shed tears.

"But—but," blurted Brown, awkwardly, "I don't know you. I really do not think I ever set eyes on you before."

"Is it possible you can say so?" exclaimed the stranger, struggling with his emotion so that he had to apply his handkerchief to his eyes. "Is it possible you do not recognise him whom you once called friend and playmate? I did not think I was so much altered. But you will remember me—oh, yes, you will. Isn't your name Brown?"

Brown had to admit it.

"There! didn't I know, didn't I know?" cried the stranger gleefully. "Now look at me, and say if you cannot recall me. Look well, and say if I am not one of those with whom you sported long, oh! too long, ago."

Brown scrutinised him for a minute or so.

"Well," he said then, "I must own that my memory is still deficient. You might be Jim Ridley, or Tom Wilkins, or Bob Jones; you might, in fact, be anybody."

"All these have played with you in the days that are gone?" said the stranger fervently.

"They have," said Brown.

"I knew you couldn't be far out, if you tried," said the stranger rapturously, and he began to dry his tears. "Out of these cannot you name me?"

"Well," answered Brown, making another scrutiny, "you might be Bob Jones, I cannot tell. He left the old place when he was a youngster."

"I am indeed he," said the stranger, giving Brown's hand another tremendous wring. "I am Bob Jones, though now signing myself Robert instead of Bob. I am changed, as you see; for, ah me! we cannot keep the bloom of boyhood for ever, and time, edacious time, ruthless time, lays his devastating fingers on the best of us. What says our noble English poet,

'Decay's effacing fingers,
Sweeps the lines where beauty lingers,'

or words to that effect. But time has touched you lightly, my dear friend. It must



BROWN SCRUTINISED HIM FOR A MINUTE.

be—let me see, how long is it since we parted?"

"Five-and-twenty years," said Brown.

"A quarter of a century. I was just going to say it was about that. Ah, dear me! what changes come in five-and-twenty years."

"Yes," said Brown, whose appetite was importunate; "won't you sit down? I'm very glad to see you. You see, we are just in the middle of a feast. Sit down and join us. By Jove, these Americans do feed you."

Mr. Jones recovered from his lachrymose mood almost as suddenly as he had fallen into it. "They do, don't they?" he said, smiling cheerfully at Brown's remark, and examining the bill of fare. Then he gave his order for a square meal.

He soon proved himself the most charming of companions. He was indeed proud that he had lived to have the honour of an introduction to his Grace the Duke of Dunnington, and he sincerely hoped that he might have the pleasure of a closer acquaintance with me. He had once known a man of the name of Robinson, but he didn't think I was the same, though it would be just like the strange coincidences that were always occurring, if he met two old chums in New York on the same day.

He dined with zest, and promptly corroborated every one of Brown's reminiscences and recollections of the time when the two were boys together. But, curiously enough, he did not remember anything on his own account. That little

peculiarity, however, did not strike us until afterwards.

Mr. Jones was superbly dressed in the latest imported fashion, his manner, after his first shock of surprise and emotion, was perfect, and he had no more than a suspicion, a piquant reminder as it were of the great American accent. He apologised, with the air of one bred at court, for his abrupt intrusion upon us; but he

had to confess he was quite overcome at the unexpected sight of his dear old friend Brown. We could understand his position, couldn't we? He asked questions about our plans with the freedom of a friend, and with a friend's good will, gave information and advice. He was unspeakably solicitous that we should enjoy ourselves.

"You must see this great city," he said, "and perhaps mine may be the honour and pleasure of being your guide."

When he had gone clean through the bill of fare, he was forced to hurry away to keep a business engagement; but he would see us again in the evening. And in the evening he did see us, and regaled again at our expense.

After a festive time at the board, we wandered out under the guidance of Mr. Jones, and presently found ourselves in front of a theatre.

"Suppose we go in," said Mr. Jones.

"Suppose we do," said the Duke.

"The party will be my guests," said Mr. Jones.

"Not at all," returned the Duke, "they will be mine."



JONES STOPPED, AND LAID HIS HAND ON THE DUKE'S ARM.

"I cannot hear of it, your Grace," said Mr. Jones.

"Either you are my guests or I remain outside."

We murmured that he was too good; but he answered blithely,

"Don't mention it. I expect much more from you when I go to England."

I do not remember the play; I do not remember whether it was dull, or amusing, or interesting—I remember nothing but the brilliant fascinating Jones. We were in a box, and in the course of the evening two of his intimate friends strolled in casually. One was a banker, and enormously rich; the other was a broker, and enormously rich also (this Jones whispered confidentially to us), and both were as gay and light hearted as if they did not own sixpence in the world. When the play was over, one of Jones's friends, I think it was the broker, proposed that we should "paint the town red." The exact nature of the enterprise was not clear to us; but we were in exuberant spirits, and ready for anything. So we started, determined, in our hearts, that before the night was over, we would have a high old lark. We had not gone far when suddenly Jones stopped, and laid his hand on the Duke's arm.

"By-the-bye, your Grace," he said, "I ought, perhaps, to mention that it is possible we may have adventures."

"I hope so, my dear sir," said the Duke hilariously.

"So do I," said Jones. "But what I was going to say is, that there are gentlemen in this city of New York with the haziest conception of the virtue of honesty. My advice is that we lock up our valuables. We are quite close to Bullfinch's office" (Bullfinch was the banker), "suppose he locks them up until the morning?"

Thereupon he divested himself of his watch, and pulled out a handful of money. In a jiffy each of us was taking off his watch, and pulling out his superfluous cash. Bullfinch hung back. He really didn't care to take the responsibility in the way suggested by his friend Mr. Jones; but, at length, he was persuaded, and departed with our property, promising to be after us in a few minutes. He kept

his word, and the expedition proceeded. Presently we reached a brilliantly illuminated saloon; someone suggested a drink as a fitting preliminary to the business on hand, and we went in. The beverage was champagne, for which Jones insisted on paying. We prolonged our stay, and grew merry. We would have sung songs and danced hornpipes, only the rules didn't allow it. There never were such jolly fellows as Jones and his two friends, nor such generous. They would not allow us to spend a cent. When they came to England, then we could spend. The Duke swore he liked Americans better the more he saw of them, and gave the three an invitation to his ancestral home for the following autumn, which was instantly accepted.

By and bye, Jones remembered that he wished to see the landlord, and begging us to excuse him for a few minutes, passed into another room. As he tarried unexpectedly, the banker went to look for him, and he, too, tarried. Then the broker, declaring this was fine treatment of friends, went in search of the absent ones. He likewise tarried. Getting weary of waiting, we ventured to seek the landlord ourselves. But he had seen nothing of our friends.

"I'll tell ye what it is, strangers," he said bluntly, "you've been euchred. Ye don't know a confidence-man when ye meet him, I guess."

We took counsel of a policeman, and he marched us to a police-station, where we were examined and cross-examined, and sneered at, and made to feel that three such fools had never before set foot in the City. But we did not find our missing friends. They forgot that we were waiting for them, and that they had locked up our property for safe keeping. They have it in safe keeping yet.

The Duke, as was his wont on such occasions, became savage, and said Brown should be ashamed of his friends; and Brown, savager still, retaliated that if the Duke hadn't been as vain as a peacock and as dull as an ass, he might have seen the men were swindlers; while all who heard our story muttered "tenderfeet" and chuckled.

(To be continued).

Dear Little Brownie.

A HUSBAND'S STORY OF HIS WIFE.

RETURNING from a pleasure trip to Australia, I had amongst my various shipmates, a curiously matched, yet very interesting, couple—husband and wife. For a reason which will presently appear, the ladies of our saloon regarded them, almost instinctively as it seemed, with ill-disguised scornfulness, making them in some vague way uncomfortably conscious, he of some crime against the usages of society, and she of natural inferiority. I was their champion, and when they knew this (how it oozed out I never heard), their gratitude brightened every glance they gave me with a smile, and hers was a very, very sweet one.

It's a pleasure to recall it, and I can see it now.

"Why couldn't he marry one of his own countrywomen? With his money there are hundreds of pretty English girls who would have had him," said one fair mother of three charming girls, all unmarried and disengaged.

"It's a shame!"

exclaimed a young widow hotly, putting down her "shilling shocker" to say it.

"It's downright wicked!" cried an old maid spitefully, smartly rapping the arm of her deck-chair with her fan.

"And he so handsome, too!" added another maiden of sweet seventeen, with a sigh that was very long and deep, as she looked up languishingly from a page of Byron's poems.

I never met them ashore—this husband and wife—but some years after, in the MS. of an unpublished story, I recognised his handwriting, and enquiring of the editor, in whose possession I found it, discovered that he knew nothing of its author. The identity was further shown by the title of this story being the pet name he gave his wife. Here follows the story of

"DEAR LITTLE BROWNIE."

"Well," I begin, shrugging my shoulders, "you may or may not despise me for what I am about to disclose; but it is true, and—



MY WIFE MOVES IN THE BEST SOCIETY.

and I can't help it. I wouldn't if I could.

"My wife moves in the best society of a great city, in a brown skin. Not merely with a face browned, gipsy fashion, by the sun. Not only with the dark complexion of the black-eyed, black-haired European. She was born on the other side of the globe, in old New Zealand, the child of Maori parents.

"It is an unpleasant secret, but it is one I may safely confide to you, seeing that the name I write under is not my own. If, however, you should chance to find me out, remember, I implore, that it is a secret, that, in the new old times of Australasia's most delightful colony, my wife's father and grandfather looked upon fighting as the business of their lives, and when they killed their enemies — ATE THEM!

"Sometimes, when we are very fond and loving in each other's arms, and her large, soft black eyes are looking meltingly into mine, this detestable secret *will* arise in my mind despite all I can do to shun it. I can't avoid it. It makes me shudder. It is so horrible, but there is no escape. This is specially the case when she presses me tightly to her, kisses me hard, and, showing her fine white teeth in a smile of exquisite sweetness and tenderness, says in a pretty, playfully ogreish way, all her own, 'Oh, you darling! I feel as if I could eat you all up!'

"Ugh!

"My pet name for her is Dear Little Brownie, but her real name, that is to say, the name she received when christened, was Mary Orphan, and this is her story:

"When my father first went from England to New Zealand, colonists of British birth were few and far apart there. Civilisation had become so degraded in the white men, and had so far influenced the wild natives, that for primitiveness of living and acting, and savageness in warfare, there were but small differences between them. He purchased from a Maori chief of great martial fame a certain estate, which I sold for a fortune not many years ago, because I wanted to return to the land of my ancestry. He paid for it an old musket, which the landowner so passionately coveted, that he offered to add to it a big fat wife, by way of make-weight.

"My male parent did not take a mean advantage of the desperation of desire thus indicated. He generously declined the lady. He was a Christian, and he had a sweetheart in a far land, who was coming out to him, when he had a settled home to put a wife into. And there were no divorce courts

in the colony. A merry fellow, full of pluck and energy, in height six feet two, square shouldered, deep chested; my father was also a terrible pugilist, and a scientific wrestler. The very man for his work. He was soon on the best of terms with the Maori warriors. They were as proud of him as if he belonged to their own race, and he, in his turn, without too implicit a faith in them, admired many of their characteristics, and liked them too.

"He came of a good old Buckinghamshire farming stock, and as they had flourished, generation after generation, through the past centuries, so in due time



A MERRY FELLOW, FULL OF PLUCK AND ENERGY.

he began to flourish too, and after a time was joined by and married to my mother.

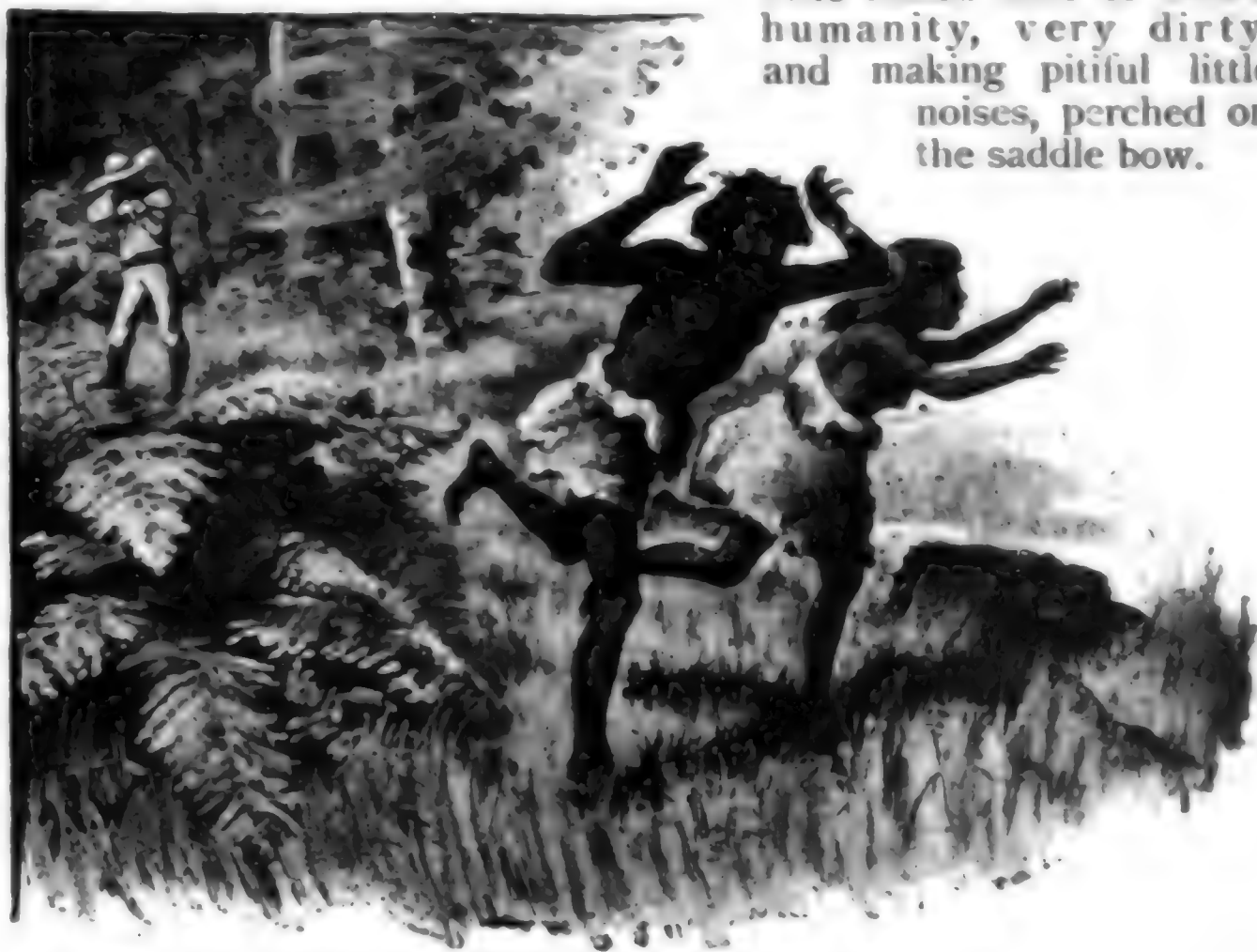
"Now she was—well, just what a good colonist's wife should be. Although lady-like and thoroughly well educated, never before accustomed to domestic privations and discomforts, and one who would not have felt out of place in the most fashionable drawing-room gathering; being a most accomplished woman, she submitted uncomplainingly to the requirements of her position. She cooked, washed, scrubbed, brewed, milked, churned, etc., and in the hour of danger did not hesitate to load and fire a musket. She was not too sensitive to bandage up wounds, or shrink in fear and horror from the hideous sights and sounds of Maori warfare. A life which had made my father rude, and almost barbarous, had made her heroic.

"One evening came a warning to my father. A strong *tana mura* (band of Maori robbers) was in the neighbourhood doing mischief, and all due preparations were made for giving the rascals a good reception. The Maori servants were armed and kept within call, and other natives who chanced to be hanging about the neighbourhood were induced by gifts of tobacco and potatoes to promise their assistance if need should be. Horrible stories of murder, outrage, and robbery were not uncommon at that time in connection with such freebooting raids, but these only stirred up in my parents a spirit of resolute bravery, which, fierce and terrible in my father, in my mother was, as I have said, heroic. It made father revengeful, bitter and cruel, and many a poor fellow in a brown skin paid, I am afraid, with life or suffering, for the ill-doing of others. My mother's valour never went so far as the taking of a single unnecessary life,

and when the fight was over, her anxiety for the wounded was not confined to those of her own race, or to those only who had fought for her. The savage foeman shared her merciful and tender care—God bless her!

"Now it so chanced that on this evening a party of friends, who had heard nothing of the danger, came riding over to our place, and my father proposed that instead of waiting to be attacked we should, having the necessary information from a reliable source, seek out the freebooters. And they agreed to do so. And that was how I came to meet my wife. One of the men brought her back after he had killed with his own hand both her father and her mother. The others had left the little brown baby where the wounded mother, no longer able to carry, had secreted it inside the trunk of a half-burned tree; after debating whether they should kill it in mercy, or leave it on the chance of its being found by some of its own people. That chance was a very remote one, but at my father's request it was adopted, and so laughing and talking they rode back from slaughter in the morning light, with no more thought or care for the dead or dying savages than if they had been so many wild cats.

"Adam Hamnet rode with them for some miles, and then quietly stayed behind, and came home later with the little naked mite of brown humanity, very dirty, and making pitiful little noises, perched on the saddle bow.



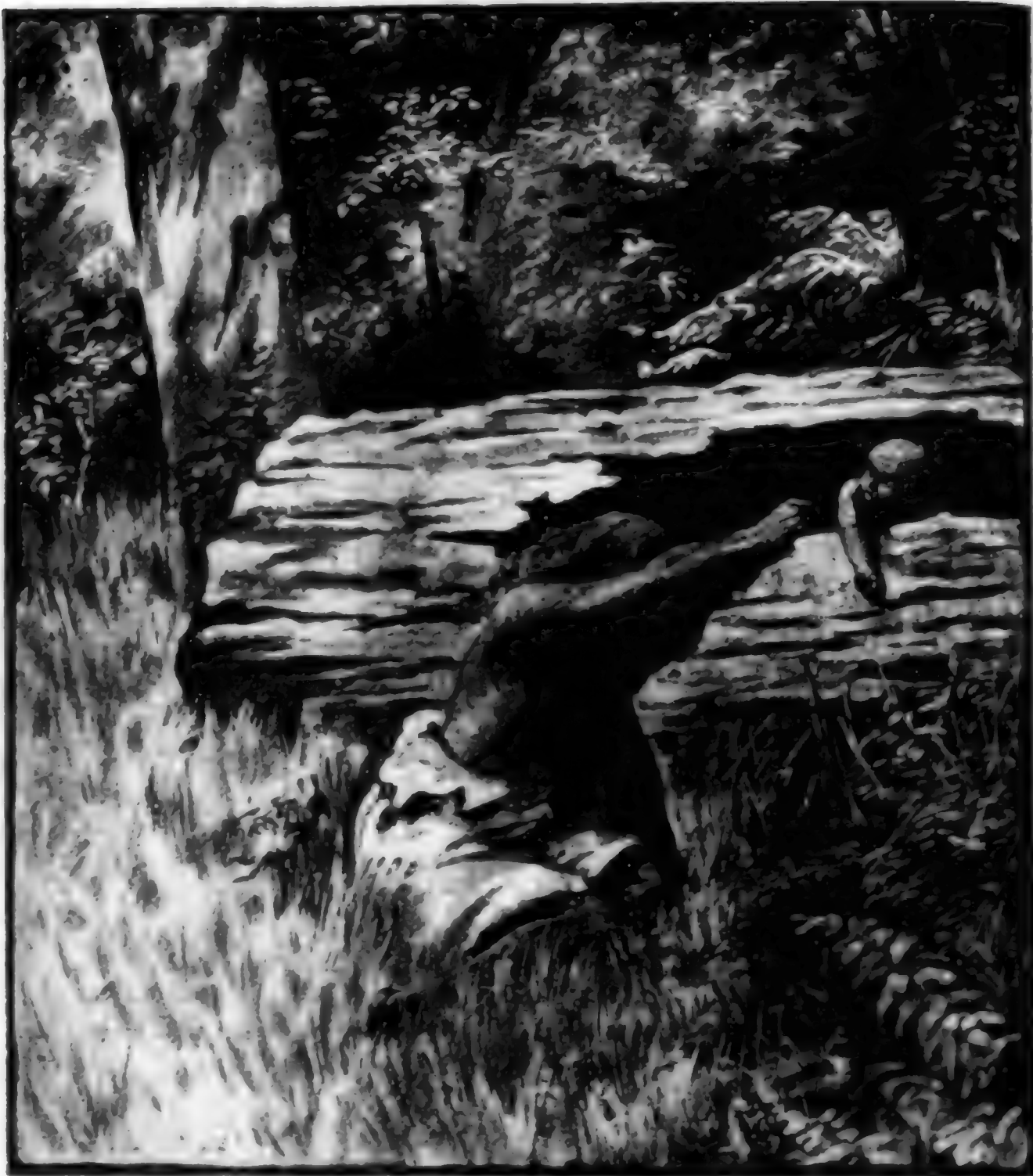
"MANY A POOR FELLOW IN A BROWN SKIN."

"He was heartily laughed at for his pains, and was terribly ashamed of his humanity, but my mother kissed him, and when he ordered one of the boys to 'put the cussed thing under the pump' before he took it indoors, carried it away herself, fed it, gave it a warm bath, put it to bed, and occupied the rest of the day in making a little white dress, and a smart pink scarf, in which little Brownie appeared at breakfast on the following day as part of the family, much to my father's amusement.

"It would be a long story to tell how this little newcomer grew and thrived side

by side with myself, how she was old Hamnet's pet, how pretty she was as a child, how quickly she took to music, how heartily she detested grammar and spelling, how affectionate, docile, gentle and self-devoted she was as a young woman. I believe she would have patiently submitted to the agonies of martyrdom to have saved my dear mother the pang of a broken finger! And so—and so—well, yes, and so I married her, and of that marriage have never yet had occasion to repent."

So ended the story, but my story has yet something to come. Let us go back a-while. One threatening and gloomy evening, while I was still on the sea, with "Little Brownie" and her husband—most of our men passengers were in the smoke-room, playing cards, and I was speaking somewhat indignantly of the treatment the Maori lady had received from the other lady passengers, lauding the gentle, affec-



THE WOUNDED MOTHER HAD SECRETED IT IN THE TRUNK OF A HALF-BURNED TREE.

tionate wife, praising her voice and her singing, asserting that she was exceptionally well read for a woman, and in a general way upholding the little brown lady's claim to respect and admiration, when the following story cropped up.

A burly New Zealand colonist had been regarding me with a comical smile while I spoke—a smile which now and then broadened out and ended in a chuckle. I was amusing him, it seemed. When I had done, he said:

"Sir, I once dined with this—this lady. There were two other Maori ladies present. All three were in evening dress—diamonds, silks, satins, in the height of the fashion. I took wine with them. After dinner they sang to us—talked about the last new books, pictures, and music—regular drawing-room talk, just as white ladies talk, but——"

"Exactly so," I interrupted triumphantly, "and pray, why not?"

He laughed and went on: "I don't care much for drawing-rooms myself, so I and three others of my kidney went out into the grounds for a smoke. We wandered about until we got amongst a lot of out-houses at the back of the gardens and there—what do you think we saw? the three Maori ladies squatting on the ground in a corner, with their knees up to their chins, and short black pipes in their mouths, smoking like furnaces."

"What!"

"It's perfectly true, and the blackest, dirtiest pipe of the three was that between the thick lips of your friend's fond little, intellectual, refined, delicate, sweet-voiced, lady-like wife—this identical, this veritable 'Dear Little Brownie!'"

How they all roared with laughter, confounded them.

I must confess that I really was taken aback; but, after all, smoking is not vicious or immoral. If men smoke, why shouldn't women? Yet, between ourselves—that dirty pipe—ugh!



Editor's Gossip.

Last month (June) was the first time that the usual piece of music was omitted from its place in the *THE LUDGATE MONTHLY*, these notes being substituted, and it was with much anxiety and many qualms that I awaited the postman for several days after publication.

Now, however, I am enjoying a most serene and contented mind, all my doubts and fears have been dispersed, and "Richard is himself again."

Space here will not permit me to thank separately all those who have so kindly responded to my invitation to advise me of their opinions in general, and their regards for *THE MONTHLY* in particular; but I assure them all that I most heartily appreciate their kind wishes for the prosperity of this Magazine, and thank them for their prompt response to my appeal.

* * *

Before going further I have an apology to make, more especially to those of my friends interested in cricket. You doubtless know what is coming—I am alluding to the cricket illustrations in last number, I cannot call them photos, in fact I am afraid if I did, I might land myself in a lawsuit for libel. Some of the last printed copies were simply atrocious. I cannot hide the fact; I plead guilty, and throw myself on the mercy of the court.

* * *

The real facts of the case, however, have been ascertained at the drum-head court martial held immediately the event became known, and the culprits having confessed their crime, were warned that if such a thing happened again, they would wish they had never been born, such would be the terrible punishment that would be meted out to them.

* * *

The flippancy of tone observable in the foregoing paragraph is simply the mask that covers the writhing spirit.

Will W. H. S., A. F., and G. H. R. accept the above in reply to their criticisms? and permit me to thank them for the kindly tone of their letters.

I can recall one or two strange stories, which may interest my readers and illustrate the vagaries of the printer's art.

Not very long ago a Cape Town paper appeared one morning printed on *brown* paper, the reason being that the vessel bringing supplies from England was late, and rather than miss an issue, this course was adopted.

In the early days of Johannesburg and its neighbouring towns, some of the novelties in printing were remarkable. One paper appeared printed in red ink, then in blue, then in grey, yellow, and so through half-a-dozen or more colours; anything was used that could be got to work on the machines, pending the arrival of supplies.

Another proprietor found himself out of paper, and had to purchase anything he could find without regard to size or colour. Then, for several weeks, his paper assumed most unwonted shapes, and various hues. In dimensions, it ranged from a moderate sized counterpane to a respectably large sheet of note paper, and the various tones of the paper would have turned a peacock mad with envy.

The difficulties experienced by newspaper proprietors in the first days of new colonies and settlements, appeal to me from the pathetic as well as the ridiculous side. I will give one more illustration of an early struggle. It is of the *Barberton Herald*, South Africa (printed on blotting paper), and it tells its own story, thus:—

"It is just possible that our readers may have noticed that occasionally our issue is somewhat variegated in colour, and oft-times is printed on foolscap, and more rarely on blotting paper! Now, that is really not our own fault, for our ordinary printing paper has been a considerable time on the road, and its non-arrival must be attributed to the "shoots," bad roads, inclement weather, scarcity of transport, and the acts of Providence generally. Some little time ago we found ourselves running short even of foolscap, and we ventured timidly into the sanctum of the *Gold Fields Times*. We thereupon explained the cause of our straightened paper circumstances, expatiated on our great grief of mind, and finally succeeded in borrowing three reams of paper, which we promised to return on arrival of our own stock. Owing to the great difficulties in the way of rapid transport, which we have enumer-

erated, we have not been able to redeem our promise, on account of which we are in a sad state of woe and tribulation. Last week we were more hard-up than ever for paper, and hearing upon good authority that the *Gold Fields Times* had, a few days previously, received two or three bales of the precious article, our agents waited upon the editor, and delicately asked for a further loan. This request was most distinctly refused; the arrival of the two or three bales was positively denied, and the instant return of the three reams previously lent peremptorily demanded. Our agents were at first somewhat dejected and cast down in spirit; but the usual recriminations common on such occasions followed, and now our respective staffs are not even on speaking terms. During the morning of the same day, the editor of the *G. F. Times* sent across to us to borrow our galley-press (a species of machinery very favourably known to compositors), which has hitherto been freely used by him; but our foreman, being well acquainted with the spirit displayed by our contemporary, declined any further interchange of civilities, and also refused the loan of the galley press. A few hours after we received the following from a solicitor:—

'Sirs—I am instructed to demand from you the immediate restitution of three reams of printing paper lent you, or the payment of the sum of five pounds and five shillings the value thereof. Also the sum of one hundred and fifty pounds sterling, being damage and loss sustained through your failing to return the above-mentioned paper within the time promised, thus causing my clients a week's delay in issuing the paper. Failing immediate compliance, legal proceedings will be instituted.'

"We assure our contemporary that we shall await the threatened legal proceedings with positive joy, while our very many readers will be glad to hear that our new plant—one of the finest north of the Orange River—will positively be here within a month, when we shall have plenty of scope to ventilate grievances, giving reliable mining information, and the very latest news of the outside world. We wish you a happy and prosperous new year."

Truth is stranger than fiction; this phrase, worn threadbare by repetition, is yet, however, the expression we use to indicate anything extraordinary yet truthful.

What, for instance, could one regard as more fictional than, say, one of Rider Haggard's African tales, with its plethora of slaughter, bristling with deeds of almost impossible bravery, and set in a country lending itself to the wildest and widest of mythological incident.

"A Memorable Christmas," which appears in this month's number of *THE LUDGATE MONTHLY*, is a story of actual fact. The scene of the tale is almost identical with several of Mr. Haggard's plots. The

incidents related were experienced exactly as set forth by the author, without enlargement or exaggeration of the leading details in any form whatever, and will, I think, impress many of my readers as being stranger than fiction.

During a conversation I had the other day with a well-known medical man, the subject of wrinkles came up—crow's feet, I mean. Now, my fair readers, follow me closely, and I will give you the result of my friend's remarks on this very interesting topic. First of all, take the cause—worry, late hours, illness, and old age, are the chief causes of those lines round the corners of the eyes, bearing the expressive if not euphonious denomination of crow's feet. Children and young people seldom show them, and they should not commence to appear till well on to middle age. But the worry and pace we live at in these fast moving times, are not conducive to the retention of youthful looks so long as nature intends. The tissues under the skin waste away, and the outward skin, not having a full padding of flesh underneath to keep it properly extended, shrinks up, causing these horrid wrinkles.

Now for the doctor's remedy. Bathe the face night and morning, first in hot water, and again in tepid water, and dry thoroughly. Then with the fingers rub the wrinkles well while the skin is soft, using, if necessary, a little cold cream. The lines on the forehead can be manipulated in the same manner. Avoid late hours, and sleep with the top of the window open. Good sound sleep is a great preventative, and with open-air exercise, and ordinary good bodily health, you may hope to put off the evil for many a day.

A new feature commences with the present number of the *LUDGATE MONTHLY*, under the title of "Whispers from the Woman's World." It is not of the usual dressy nature, but glances lightly (perhaps too lightly, owing to the limited space available) over various topics interesting to the modern feminine mind. If these articles are appreciated, they will be continued as a regular feature. Perhaps some of my fair readers will give me their opinions on the matter.

It happens rather as a coincidence that several ladies have written me lately asking if I could devote a few pages to their special interests.

I had previously arranged to have the article referred to in foregoing paragraph written specially for the July number.

* * *

I notice our little godchild, "The Ludgate Weekly," has just been enlarged. Besides this improvement it is giving a really excellent Photo Plate each week, and is paying me the compliment of following out my cricket sketches on a more extended scale.

It is certainly a really wonderful pennyworth, and I can strongly advise those who take a weekly journal of this class, and I think most of us do, to order a copy next week.

* * *

By the time this is in the hands of my readers, we shall be on the eve of a General Election, as I hear Parliament will dissolve between the 25th and 28th of June, and the Election will follow within a fortnight; then—if, as Gilbert sings,

Every boy and every girl,
That's born into this world alive,
Is either a little Liberal,
Or else a little Conservative—

it follows that we shall all be electioneer-

ing and canvassing for our favourite member; and until the ballot has settled the momentous question of who is to be and not to be M.P., very little else will be talked about.

* * *

London is beginning to thin rapidly even now, and members, with their wives and belongings, are preparing for the coming campaign; shutting up their houses in town, and hurrying off to their constituencies to shake hands with their very dear friends who have the power of sending them back to Parliament, or putting them on the shelf. It is really comical the great love and interest for their constituents some of our members can bring forth periodically, and how they can hide their deep feelings when safely elected.

* * *

Readers will forgive me if I remind them again, that I shall at all times be glad to have their ideas on the contents of this magazine, and any letters of general interest will be replied to in this Gossip. The criticism afforded by an intelligent reader not only enables an Editor to glean which part of his literary matter is most appreciated, by the fact of its calling forth comment, but it also very frequently opens out fresh ideas, and thus guides the way for the future.

